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BAPTISM.

BAPTISM:

ITS INSTITUTION, ITS PRIVILEGES,

AND

ITS RESPONSIBILITIES.

BY THE

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ERRATA.

On page 34, in the 8th line from the top :—
Instead of "by placing a," *read* "by omitting the."

On page 117, in the foot note :—
Instead of "Sandy's" *read* "Sandys'."

On page 179, in the foot notes :—
Instead of "lit" *read* "lib."

PREFACE.

For some years past many of the Evangelical clergy have been unwilling to give any prominence to their convictions upon the subject of Baptismal grace and privilege; in part, because they have strongly deprecated doctrinal controversy, and in part, because they have been afraid of false interpretations, and sectarian criticisms. It is high time that they should emancipate themselves from this unnecessary bondage; declaring their opinions in all honesty and manliness, and no longer leaving their flocks uninstructed on one of the most important doctrines of Christianity.

The immediate consequence of this reserve has been, that a large proportion of our laity have not only learned to undervalue the sacrament of Baptism, but have gradually fallen away from their allegiance to the Book of Common Prayer in which its blessings are so Scripturally enforced. Greatly to the injury of the Church of England, and to the advancement of Dissent, they have brought themselves to believe that the faithful preaching of the Gospel is necessarily antagonistic to the language of our Liturgy upon this

subject; and that if the Evangelical clergy were really consistent, they would never rest satisfied till they obtained a Revision of the Prayer-book.

We have brought this state of things upon ourselves, and have no one else to blame. Whenever men are afraid to speak out plainly, they are sure to be misunderstood; and thus the very object of their silence becomes defeated. It has been so with ourselves. The present work is, therefore, presented to the Church in vindication of what the author believes to be the opinions of large numbers of the Evangelical clergy on the doctrine of Baptism; and for the purpose, if possible, of bringing back the minds of our disaffected laity to see the true harmony which exists between the Bible and the Prayer-book in relation to it.

Lest it should be said, however, that he has spoken in these pages more strongly upon Baptism than is consistent with the general scope of what is called Evangelical teaching, a few quotations shall be at once introduced from the writings of two men, who though now departed to their rest, will ever remain faithful and honoured types of the school to which they belonged: viz., the Rev. Charles Simeon, of Cambridge; and the Rev. Edward Bickersteth, Rector of Watton, Herts.

Mr. Simeon used the following language:—

"St. Peter says, 'Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, for the remission of sins;' and in another place, 'Baptism doth now save us.' And, speaking elsewhere of baptized persons who were unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, he says, 'He hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.' Does not this very strongly countenance the idea which our Reformers entertained,—that the remission of our sins, as well as the Regeneration of our souls is an attendant on the Baptismal rite?" [a]

Again,—

"In the Baptismal Service we thank God for having regenerated the baptized Infant by His Holy Spirit. Now from hence it appears that, in the opinion of our Reformers, Regeneration and Remission of sins did accompany Baptism. But in what sense did they hold this sentiment? Did they maintain that there was no need for the seed then sown in the heart of the baptized person, to grow up, and to bring forth fruit; or that he could be saved in any other way than by a progressive Renovation of his soul after the divine image? Had they assented, or countenanced any such doctrine as that, it would have been impossible for any enlightened person to concur with them. But nothing can be conceived more repugnant to their sentiments, than such an idea as this: so far from harbouring such a thought, they have, and that too in this very prayer, taught us to look unto God for that total change of heart and life, which, long since their days, has begun to be expressed by the term Regeneration." [b]

It will be seen from this last sentence, that Mr. Simeon's view of the word Regeneration exactly agrees with the one laid down in the following pages. [c]

[a] See "Life of Simeon," by Carus. P. 304. Large edition.

[b] Idem. Pp. 301, 302.

[c] See pages 25—28.

The same may be remarked from another extract:—

"The Israelites as a nation in covenant with God were highly privileged; for to them belonged the adoption and the glory and the covenant, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises. (Rom. ix. 4.) The same, I doubt not, may be justly said of all that are baptized; indeed we doubt not but that our Reformers had that very passage of Scripture in their eye, when in our Baptismal Service they instructed us to thank God for having regenerated the baptized person by His Holy Spirit; and in our Catechism, to speak of children as by the ordinance of Baptism 'made members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven.' These expressions are doubtless strong; and so are St. Paul's expressions respecting the benefits of circumcision; and every blessing which he asserts to have been conveyed by circumcision, we may safely and truly apply to Baptism. By the very admission of persons into covenant with God, they are brought into a New State, and have a Right and Title to all these privileges." [d]

The testimony of the late Rev. Edward Bickersteth is no less clear and out-spoken, as the following passages will prove:—

"That His sacraments might be perpetually observed, and that we might receive inestimable spiritual advantage, it has pleased our merciful Saviour to make them *effectual means of grace* to the believer." [e]

"Origen, writing in the beginning of the third century, in his Homily on Lev. xii., says, 'Let it be considered what is the reason, that whereas the Baptism of the Church is given for the Forgiveness of sins, Infants also are by the usage of the

[d] Idem. Pp. 545, 546. [e] Page 70.

Church baptized; when, if there were nothing in Infants that wanted forgiveness, the Grace of Baptism would be needless to them.' And again, on Luke xiv., he says, 'None is free from pollution though his life is but the length of one day upon earth; and it is for that reason, because, by the sacrament of Baptism the pollution of our birth is taken away, that Infants are baptized.'"[f]

"Baptism is the sign, the means, and the pledge of Forgiveness, and a real help to assure our souls of it."[g]

"As to the Baptismal Regeneration of Infants, let us remember the only limitation in administering ordinances which seal blessings to those that receive them, is moral unfitness; but in the case of Infants, there is no such unfitness."[h]

"The term Regenerate is founded on the expression *born of water*, used by our Lord; and, *laver of Regeneration*, used by the Apostles in reference to Baptism."[i]

"The true Remedy between the sound Catechism of our Church and its beautiful Baptismal Service, and the actual state of the baptized as well as of those who join in that Service, is *not by lowering the expressions of our Formularies to meet the lowered tone of our congregations and their weak belief in the promises.* The Scriptural remedy is of another kind—the faithful and full preaching of the doctrines of the Gospel, and the unspeakable blessings and privileges which God has assured to the believer in His Covenants of Promise. Let these be realized, and all is harmonious and consistent. The office of the Church is not to part with its savour, but to be the salt of the earth; not to hide its light, but to put it on a candlestick. And for ever blessed be our God, that our Reformers had faith in God's word not to flinch from the full statement and exhibition of the riches of His grace."[j]

[f] Page 81. [g] Page 85. [h] Page 168. [i] Page 208.
[j] Pages 196, 197.

These quotations are given to show how clearly, comfortably, and *ex animo* their venerated authors received the language of their Church on this important doctrine, and how little they would have sympathized, had they been now living, with those ill-instructed though well-meaning churchmen who desire to have our Baptismal Service altered. They are given moreover, that our Nonconformist bodies may see how a clergyman, who like Mr. Bickersteth, lovingly recognized their personal Christianity on the principle laid down by St. Paul in Eph. vi. 24, did not of necessity play truant to his own school of Church doctrines, or sacrifice his conscientious adherence to the Prayer-book. They are given moreover in the fervent hope that they may contribute, in some measure, toward greater unity of feeling among the Church clergy. Agreement among us, so far as practicable, is assuredly much to be desired. Many are at the present moment sighing for stronger bonds of union; bonds strong enough to preserve the pure faith of the Gospel without compromise, yet large enough to unite men of earnestness and moderation in a spirit of mutual respect and brotherly love. If this unpretending volume should in any way contribute to results like these, the author will be amply rewarded.

PRELIMINARY REMARKS.

If there be one thing clearer than another in regard to the controversy upon Baptism, it is, that as, from the nature of the case, Scripture chiefly speaks of its effects with relation to Adults, the first duty of an inquirer is to see what it says concerning them,—reserving all consideration of its effects upon Infants to a future period.

Again; before this latter question can be satisfactorily entered into, the Scriptural authority which we have for administering Baptism to Infants ought to be seriously examined.

Our proposed review of this important and interesting controversy will, therefore, take the order here suggested. We shall begin with the way in which Baptism is spoken of by the Apostles in direct reference to Adults. We shall then describe the Scriptural authority which we have for holding that Infants may rightly receive Baptism. And, lastly, we shall discuss the extent to which the covenant blessings of this sacrament, as administered to Adults, may be applied to Infants also.

It may be desirable, however, upon the threshold of these inquiries, to state as briefly as possible a few of the doctrines which will be found to underlie their contents; because nothing more fairly anticipates criticism than some kind of previous acquaintance with the principles upon which a book is written. In the present case, all those who take extreme views, either on the Calvinistic or the Sacramentarian side of theology, will certainly be adverse critics. Those, on the other hand, who, like Hooker, maintain the doctrine of grace in consistency with the general love of God and His willingness to save all mankind, and who acknowledge in the Sacraments an effectual accompanying power of the Holy Spirit to those who rightly receive them, will probably read the following pages with a more favourable judgment.

In consistence with these principles we shall assume—

(1) The love of God for the whole world, in the gift of His dear Son Jesus Christ.

(2) The general manifestation of that love, by the gift of His Holy Spirit in various measures and degrees of grace.

(3) The salvation of those only, whose lives are answerable to that degree of grace which is thus offered or afforded to them.

(4) The certainty of the final perseverance of all

to whom the grace of faith in justification is effectually given.

Such were the views of the great Hooker. And if there be one human teacher more than another to whom the writer of this treatise would pledge his own opinion, it is that illustrious man. There can be no doubt that, to many minds which have been educated in a certain school of theology, the idea of God giving grace to a soul not finally effectual to salvation, appears crude, self-contradictory, unscriptural, and opposed to the fundamental principles of the Divine Sovereignty. Nevertheless Augustine, than whom no one ever more upheld the doctrine of Divine Sovereignty, most clearly distinguished between the grace of God, which might be lost, and the grace of final perseverance, which was indefectible.[a] Indeed, this forms one of the greatest points of separation between the writings Augustine and Calvin, and can never be too strongly remembered by those who are in the habit of regarding authors as identical in their teaching. The Puritan theology of this country chiefly followed Calvin, and denied the doctrine of God's preventing and co-operating grace in any souls except those of the elect; they made all grace to be of necessity saving and effectual to the end; and although many of them allowed the truth, that God gave His

[a] *De Dono Perseverantiæ.*

Holy Spirit to work in the hearts of some who were finally lost, [b] yet they seldom formally or dogmatically allowed such a work to be any personal communication of Grace, properly so called, thinking it would interfere with the doctrine of election. [c]

The question is one of words, more than of reality; for if it be conceded that God gives His Holy Spirit to work in the soul concurrently with the human will, striving with it and co-operating with it, and yet that such a soul may be finally lost, we obviously each agree to the same thing, although one party may call this truly Grace, and the other party (to uphold a more metaphysical and philosophical theory of election) may refuse to call it by that name. That such a work really is carried on, the scriptures make plain. Thus our Lord tells us, there are some who *believe* "for a while," and even rejoice in the Word of God, yet at last fall away (Luke viii. 13): others, in whom the Word brings forth

[b] See a remarkable extract from Goodwin's works, quoted below, in the chapter on Sacramental Grace. Part I. See also Matthew Mead's "Almost Christian Discovered" (xv. 1, 2, 3, 4); where he says, "A man may have the Spirit only transiently, not abidingly. The Spirit may *be* in a man, and yet not *dwell* in a man."

[c] The following statement of Thomas Adams, the Puritan, is an exception to this. "There is a grace that works freely, but not effectually; which may be had and lost."—Exposition of 2nd. Ep. of Peter on ch. 1, v. 2.

a certain kind of good fruit, only the fruit comes not to perfection. (Luke viii. 14.) St. Paul, again, describes some who have been enlightened, and have even tasted of the heavenly gifts, and have been made partakers of the Holy Ghost, who have nevertheless fallen away beyond the reach of repentance. (Heb. vi. 4—6.) St. Peter also describes some who have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of their Saviour, and have known the way of righteousness, who have, nevertheless, been entangled and overcome, and lost at last. (2 Pet. ii. 20—22.) Now these overtures and inward actings of the Spirit we call, Grace; being the grace of God in the Gospel of Jesus Christ imparted to the souls of sinners for their salvation. Owing, however, to inscrutable causes, concerning which we can only bow down our heads and be silent, this grace, although illuminating and exciting, fails to be really renewing and saving. Hence such persons, like the Galatians, may "fall from grace." (Gal. v. 4.) Like some mentioned by St. Paul, to the Corinthians, they may "receive the grace of God in vain." (2 Cor. vi. 1.) Like others mentioned by the same Apostle, to the Hebrews, they may "do despite to the Spirit of grace." (Heb. x. 29.) But throughout all their experience, we hold that these persons never could have had any effectual justifying and renewing grace; otherwise they would have persevered to the end.

This distinction of terms, whether rightly or wrongly, will be found to underlie the whole of the present volume.

Another principle which will be found to underlie the present volume, especially its third part, is the necessity of a strict separation between the guilt and condemnation due to original sin, and the guilt and condemnation due to actual sin. The real point of contact between these two forms of sin is, the infection of our depraved nature,—and in that respect they are inseparable, being mutually related to each other as the acorn is to the oak, or the invisible seeds of leprosy to their full-grown development. But the idea which is expressed by infection is very different from that which is expressed by guilt and condemnation; inasmuch as the former still exists in a justified believer, while the latter are wholly remitted. Hence, although we may find it impossible to disconnect the moral purification of original and actual sin, it is not only impossible, but absolutely necessary, to disconnect them in relation to the remission of their guilt and condemnation. For the guilt and condemnation of Original sin stand on an entirely different ground from that on which the guilt and condemnation of actual sin stands. In reference to Original sin, we are adjudged guilty and condemned, not for anything done by ourselves, and for which we are morally

responsible; but for something done by Adam, long antecedent to our birth, and with which, as free moral agents, we were in no sort of way connected. We do not mean to say that we are not justly held liable to condemnation on this account; for, the infection of a corrupt nature having been transmitted to us, it seems impossible that an infinitely holy God should not impute to it the guilt and condemnation due to that transgression from which it originally sprang. The ground, therefore, upon which we are held guilty and condemned through Original sin is, strictly speaking, imputative, and is thoroughly independent of our own personal responsibility. Not so, however, in reference to Actual sin. The ground on which guilt and condemnation cover us in relation to our own personal transgressions, is not imputative, but real. We are held guilty, on this ground, for our individual acts; we are solely condemned for the violation of our own personal responsibilities.

Such, then, being the distinction between the character of our guilt and condemnation at birth under Original sin, and of our guilt and condemnation by practice under Actual sin, it follows that there may be an equal distinction in the character of their remission through atonement. We are aware that some theologians regard any separation between the forgiveness of original and actual sin, as subversive of

the sacrifice of Christ. The very opposite opinion will be maintained in these pages. We believe that as Adam sinned, and thereby brought guilt and condemnation upon the whole world in a manner perfectly distinct from the way in which guilt and condemnation have since been personally contracted, so our Lord Jesus Christ has specially removed from the whole world the guilt and condemnation of that one original sin, in order that no one should be henceforth condemned, except for sin actually committed. In other words, the effect of the atonement is such, that under the covenant of redemption none are ever condemned by the imputation of the sin of Adam, but only by the guilt of their own sins,—that is to say, of those sins for which they are only themselves morally responsible.

This view, so far from militating against the integrity of the Atonement, really illustrates its perfections; inasmuch as it shows how the dealings of the Divine government under redemption have been brought into strict harmony with those eternal and immutable principles of righteousness, which God himself announced to His ancient people, when He said,—"The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son; the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall

be upon him." (Ezek. xviii. 20.) Apart from the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ, this statement could never have been made; for an infant, not committing actual sin, must then have borne the iniquity of Adam's original transgression. But Christ, having redeemed the whole world from the penalty due to that first transgression, He has power to remit the guilt and condemnation attached to our original sin, leaving us answerable only for the sins which we subsequently commit in our own proper persons. It may suit a hard, stiff, metaphysical form of Calvinism to repudiate this, and represent it as stultifying the doctrine of saving grace. But such an opinion is only sectional in the Church of Christ. Viewed in connection with the great body of the most enlightened divines of all ages, the doctrine here laid down may be regarded as truth. At any rate, it is well that the readers of this volume should be informed of its adoption in the coming argument upon the benefits of Infant Baptism.

Another principle which will be found to run throughout this treatise is, the existence of a visible Church of Christ, credited generally with all the blessings of the covenant, although an invisible section only of it will at last inherit those blessings. The kingdom of heaven is continually compared by our Divine Master to an aggregation of elements of

unlike character in one visible and indivisible body. Thus the Gospel net is described as containing both good and bad fish,—the separation not taking place till the end of the world, thereby proving the permanence of its visible unity. Again; the whole Christian Church is compared to wise virgins and foolish virgins, in one body (Matthew xxv.), and to faithful and unfaithful servants, in one household (Matt. xxv. 14—30); all of whom are represented as having received certain gifts to be improved and used, though some neglected to do so, and were cast away in consequence. These and many other passages which might be mentioned plainly show, that while God has an invisible Church, known to His own Divine mind and everlastingly elect, according to His hidden counsel of wisdom—a Church which shall be manifested hereafter at the Redeemer's coming (Rom. viii. 23), etc.; yet that, under the present dispensation of grace, all Christians in the visible Church are to be welcomed as having a true standing in the covenant, and blessed with its promises and privileges, until finally and everlastingly cut off from them. This will appear more and more plainly in the body of the work, and, therefore, need not now be defended. It is only introduced here to prepare the mind of the reader for the general drift of what is to follow.

Let us add only a few words more on the subject

of Regeneration, and with that we will conclude these preliminary observations.

The doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration has, of late years, been a constant source of disquietude to the Church; in part, because some of our divines have enforced it on the basis of Roman Catholic interpretation, openly teaching the principle of an *opus operatum*, which both our Reformers and early Fathers universally disavowed;[d] and in part, because the meaning of the word Regeneration is not properly agreed upon,—some controversialists using it in one sense, some in another,—so that there is no wonder we have inextricable confusion on the subject.

Regeneration is generally held by our Nonconformists, to be "that work of the Holy Spirit by which we experience *a change of heart*. . . . . It is expressed in Scripture by being quickened; having Christ formed in the heart; a partaking of the Divine

[d] Thus Jerome writes, when speaking of those who had been baptized into the Church of Christ without any genuine faith; "Of these, it must be said, that they received the water indeed, but did not receive the Spirit." *In Ezek.* xvi. 4. And so speaks Cranmer: "The outward sign doth neither give us the Spirit of God, neither yet grace,—that is the favour of God. For if through the washing in the water the Spirit of grace were given, then should it follow, that *whoever* was baptized in water should receive this precious gift."—*Sermon on Baptism.*

nature."[e] When such is the definition of the word, any necessary concurrence of Baptism with it as an instrumental cause of its production, naturally excites opposition, and leads to the most violent denunciations against what is called an unscriptural dogma. Is this, however, the sense in which the word Regeneration is used in Scripture? Is it that which was understood by the writers of catholic antiquity? Is it that which the Church of England adopts in her services for adult and infant Baptism? The following pages will reply to this in the negative, exhibiting Regeneration as a spiritual change of state, instead of a spiritual change of heart;—a change of state which, in the case of adults duly baptized, *follows* this change of heart; and, in the case of infants duly baptized, is graciously intended to *lead on to* such an inward change. Regeneration, therefore, by Baptism, when understood in this sense, involving only an altered relationship to God, and the impartation of accompanying covenant gifts and privileges, is a very different doctrine from that before described; and assertions uttered or written against the latter, have no true bearing on the former. We are not going to argue the point here, for that is done in the body of the present treatise. All we desire to do now is, to impress on the mind of the reader that,

[e] Quoted from Buck's "Theological Dictionary."

whether rightly or wrongly, Regeneration will not be regarded as synonymous with a moral renovation of heart; though, of course, its covenant blessings must always be associated with that great change, and cannot be said to exist in their fulness until it has been effected by the Spirit of God.

If one word more be needed by way of introduction, it only remains for the author to assure his Nonconformist readers, and more especially the Baptists, that in speaking strongly upon the points from which he differs with them, he does not for a moment wish to depreciate their experience of personal religion; and that should he, in any of his expressions, have wounded their feelings, he asks their forgiveness, begging them carefully to distinguish between opposition to a theological creed, and hostility to individual character.

PART I.

The Covenant Blessings of Adult Baptism.

"THE Sacrament of Baptism is one thing; and the Conversion of the heart is another thing; but the Salvation of man is completed in them both."

ST. AUGUSTINE.

CHAPTER I.

PRE-REQUISITE CONDITIONS FOR A RIGHT RECEPTION OF ADULT BAPTISM.

WHEN our blessed Lord instituted Baptism, He said to His disciples—"Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that *believeth* and is baptized shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark xvi. 15, 16.) Afterwards, when St. Peter addressed the multitude on the day of Pentecost, he said—"*Repent* and be baptized every one of you." (Acts ii. 38.) Scripture here gives two most plain pre-requisites for a right reception of Adult Baptism; viz., faith and repentance. About this there can be no difficulty. The only issue which can be raised upon it is,—whether the Apostles admitted persons to Baptism as soon as they made a profession of faith in Christ; or whether they closed the door against those who made hasty professions,

and only administered the rite to such as gave well-sustained proofs of a vital, saving faith. This point, however, is no less simply determinable by an appeal to Scripture. As a matter of fact, how did the Apostles act? When the three thousand were "pricked in their hearts" at the feast of Pentecost, were they not all baptized on their immediate profession of faith? It is written—"*the same day* there were added three thousand souls." Whether all these were possessed of vital, saving faith, being converted to God by an inward renewal of their hearts, it is impossible for us to say. That they possessed an illuminating faith by the power of the Holy Ghost is unquestionable; but as we know from Heb. vi. 4—6, and also from 1 Cor. xiii. 2, that this is a gift of God to the church, which may fall short of saving grace and effectual conversion, it is not at all improbable but that some of these so-called believers or saints may have had the one without the other. At all events, no time was allowed for testing the fact. They solemnly professed their repentance and faith; and on that profession they were immediately baptized. The same may be said of the jailor at Philippi. The earthquake happened at midnight;

yet it is written—"He took them *the same hour of the night,* and washed their stripes, and was baptized, he and all his, straightway." (Acts xvi. 33.) Now here there was certainly no time left for any long examination or testing of the man's faith. Most probably, under these peculiar circumstances, it was hearty, and genuine; yet it might on the other hand, from the extraordinary nature of the case, have been impulsive.—At any rate, there was no hesitation on the part of the Apostle. The man's profession having been solemnly made, after due enlightenment in the word of the Gospel kingdom, Baptism was held by St. Paul to have been rightly received.

Let us proceed to a still more striking case. It is written in Acts viii. 13—"Then Simon himself believed also, and ..... was baptized." Now we must bear in mind that these are not the words of any human speaker. Here the Holy Ghost Himself speaks, through the pen of St. Luke; so that on divine testimony it is declared, Simon Magus "believed." Nevertheless we know full well from what follows, that he had no saving faith, no real conversion. In what sense, then did the Holy Ghost say that he believed? We

think the nature of the case will easily allow us to suppose that he was convinced of the truth of Philip's testimony concerning Christ; that he was overpowered, for the time, by the genuine character of Philip's miracles, and satisfied that his mission was from heaven. In other words, he may have submitted his mind to Christianity, and recognized Christ as its divine Author, although his heart remained unconverted. At all events, with this express testimony of the Holy Spirit—"Then Simon himself believed also," we have no right, by reason of his subsequent conduct, to maintain that his previous profession was hypocrisy. Nor can we doubt (as no rightly taught person supposes him to have had either repentance or faith in the true and saving sense of those words), that Philip felt justified in administering baptism to him, simply on his solemn profession of those pre-requisites. Had he first been put upon a course of probation, the hollowness of his belief in Christ would soon have become transparent; but following the Apostolic custom, Philip made no such delay: he at once accepted his profession of faith, and, assumed in the gentleness of Christian charity, that the ordinance was being rightly received.

There can be little doubt, however, that the Apostles, while they never refused Baptism where true faith was professed, always administered it to adults on the supposition that the faith so professed was a living justifying faith, proceeding from a renewal of the heart, as well as from an illumination of the mind; for the eunuch of Ethiopia was strictly enjoined to confess so much,—"If thou believest with all thine *heart* thou mayest." (Acts viii. 37.) The truth is, Scripture gives the same title of faith, both to that which remains permanent and saving, and to that which is temporary and unavailing. Take, for example, our Lord's explanation of the parable of the Sower. Those "on the good ground" are described in Luke viii. 15, as believing permanently; those "on the rock," in verse 13, as "believing only for awhile," and then "falling away." The faith of the Ethiopian eunuch seems to have been of the former kind; that of Simon Magus, of the latter. It represented, in other words, no true principle of spiritual renovation, but one only of spiritual illumination which simply affected his mind, while it left his heart untouched. Hence it did not lead to his justification, because, as St. Paul

says, it is "with the *heart* man believeth unto righteousness." (Rom. x. 10.)

From this brief review of Apostolic practice in relation to Adult Baptism, it would seem that Scripture sanctions us in assuming it to be always rightly received when those who come forward as candidates for it make a solemn profession of true faith and repentance, and give for the time being some reasonable evidence of it. Whether this be a right reception of the Sacrament in the sight of Him who knoweth and searcheth the heart is another question, and one with which, as ministers of the sanctuary, we have nothing to do. It is simply our business to demand these solemn vows of repentance and faith in their fullest and highest sense. And, these being rendered unto us, accompanied by reasonable evidences of their sincerity, we are not only not at liberty to refuse Baptism, but are bound, like the Apostles, to regard it as having been rightly received, and to pronounce the blessing accordingly, whatever that blessing may be.

CHAPTER II.

COVENANT BLESSINGS ATTACHED TO THE RIGHT RECEPTION OF ADULT BAPTISM.

(Summed up in general terms.)

THE object of this chapter will be to point out that general summary of covenant blessings which St. Peter attached to Baptism, when he delivered his first evangelical announcement of sacramental doctrine to the multitudes assembled in Jerusalem, on the Feast of Pentecost, saying—"Repent and be baptized, every one of you, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." (Acts ii. 38.) Other blessings may be traced to Baptism in different parts of the New Testament, and some may be mentioned also as inseparably bound up with these; but, at present, we only refer to the two herein noted; viz., "Remission of Sins," and "The gift of the Holy Ghost," which, speaking generally, may be said to sum up all the rest in themselves.

The first of these—"Remission of Sins," involves a change of state or standing in the sight of God.

The second of these—"The gift of the Holy Ghost," involves a change of privilege, or grace bestowed upon ourselves.

But before these covenant blessings are imparted, it must be borne in mind that "Repentance toward God, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ" are presupposed, which, when possessed in their full power, involve also a change of mind, will, and heart; *i. e.*, a moral renovation of nature.

Thus three great changes are brought to view in the history of Adult Baptism; one preceding the Sacrament, implying a moral and spiritual awakening to renewed life; and two directly resulting from Baptism,—viz., a change in spiritual state or standing before God, and a change in spiritual gift and privilege.

To understand the peculiar force and significance of these three great changes (which really lie at the root of the whole of this controversy) it must be remembered that the fall of man brought in three great correlative curses; viz., Infection, Condemnation, and Helplessness. In other words,

we are infected in respect of our Nature; condemned in regard to our State; and helpless in relation to all divine grace and Privilege. It is on this account that, when speaking of man as "born after the flesh," we are obliged to describe him as lost. For while he is separated from God, both by the infection of sin and by the condemnation of the law, so he must remain for ever separate, as far as nature is concerned, on account of his having none of the gifts and privileges of grace.

Such, then, being our threefold curse, the Apostles were sent forth with the Gospel of grace in their hands to produce a threefold change; viz., the renewal of an infected nature, deliverance from a condemned state, and an investiture of divine privilege. For which purpose they had but two instruments; viz., the Word to be preached, and Baptism to be administered. It will be our object, therefore, to show in what way these two instruments performed their respective parts.

Nor will it be in any way difficult, if Scripture only be adhered to. For it is obvious that the Gospel, or Word of God preached, was at this

time no further used by the Holy Spirit than to work repentance in the hearts of the multitude. We are told that being convicted in their consciences, they repented and believed; after which they listened to the Apostles' proposal, and were baptized. As remarked already, it is not certain whether the whole of this vast crowd possessed true repentance and faith in the highest sense of the terms. Probably not, if we may judge from the conduct of Ananias and Sapphira. But, at all events, they were admitted to Baptism on the profession of it; and it was only in relation to the assumed pre-existence of this qualification that St. Peter said—"Repent, and be baptized, for the remission of sins." This is clearly stated by Dr. Waterland, when he says, in relation to Adult Baptism—"Preventing grace must go before, to work in the man faith and repentance, which are qualifications previous to Baptism, and necessary to render it valid."[a]

Now faith and repentance, in the highest sense of the terms, flow only from a renewed nature and life. That this is true of Faith there can be no question; for it is one of the "fruits of the Spirit."

[a] See his Sermon on Regeneration, p. 14.

(Gal. v. 22.) And where the Spirit brings forth "fruit" there must be a renewed or spiritual life. Indeed, St. Paul speaks of the Holy Spirit "purifying their hearts by faith." (Acts xv. 9.) The same Apostle writes also in another place—"The life that I live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God." (Gal. ii. 20.) And such is the testimony of all our best Divines. Take Dr. Barrow for example, who says—"Faith is the root of our spiritual life."[b] Or, go back to the Homilies of Queen Elizabeth's reign, where, in one place, faith is distinctly called "the root and well-spring of all newness of life;"[c] and, in another, "the first entry into Christian life."[d]

A similar testimony is delivered in regard to the renewing grace of Repentance. Hooker says—"The well-spring of repentance is faith,—first breeding fear and then love; which love causes hope, and hope resolution of attempt: "I will go to my Father, and say, I have sinned against

[b] See Dr. Barrow's second Sermon on the Creed.

[c] Second part of the Homily concerning "Worthily Receiving the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ." Epilogue.

[d] Third part of the Homily for Rogation Week. Introduction.

heaven, and against thee." That is to say, "I will do what the duty of a convert requireth."[e] Dr. South says—"Repentance saves not, as it is a work, or such a number of works; but as it is the effect of a renewed nature, and a sanctified heart, from which it flows."[f] But why should we quote any human testimonies when Scripture settles the question by speaking of those who are "*renewed* unto repentance"? (ἀνακαινίζειν εἰς μετάνοιαν.) (Heb. vi. 6.) What do we need more than this to show that if the Word of God preached produces the μετάνοια, or repentance, it is only because it has first begotten a renewal of heart or nature?

Hence the Word preached was the instrument by which these persons experienced the first great change which they needed, and from thence they were led to the next great instrument of their salvation, namely, Baptism. For, be it observed, St. Peter did not address them saying—"You have now repented and believed the Gospel; therefore all your sins are pardoned, and all the

[e] Eccl. Pol., B. 6, chapter iii.

[f] South's Sermon, VI.; on "The Necessity of Immediate Repentance." Vol. iv., p. 87.

covenant blessings of grace are given you." But he said—"Be baptized, every one of you, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Now, without entering for the moment into what either of these promised blessings fully meant, nothing can be plainer, if words mean anything, than that both of them followed, in some sense or other, the right reception of Baptism. We do not assert that in the mind and purposes of God these persons were without the blessings of pardon, even before their baptism; but certainly they were without any authoritative communication of those blessings. As it has been well said by a great writer of our Church: "Faith and repentance alone, though both of them were antecedently gifts of the Spirit, were not supposed ordinarily to entitle men to salvation without Baptism, by the Scripture accounts." (Matthew xvi. 16; 1 Peter iii. 21, etc.)[g] In other words, although these persons were already presumed to be spiritually renewed in regard to their nature; yet, in reference to their covenant state, or standing before God, they were still on the old ground, not yet having been made assured and authorized

[g] Dr. Waterland's Sermon on Regeneration, p. 23.

partakers of the merit and efficacy of Christ's Redemption. For which great change, as well as for all the covenant privileges attached to it, they were to receive the Sacrament of Baptism.

Thus the threefold change required to secure their ultimate salvation stood in the following order:—

1st. The Word of the Gospel was preached, by which means the Holy Spirit gave them repentance unto life, and they experienced a true renovation of Nature.

2nd. The Sacrament of Baptism was administered, through which, as by an appointed instrument, they were then blessed with an assurance of the "Remission of Sins," or admitted into a spiritual change of State.

3rd. By the same instrumentality of Baptism they also received "the gift of the Holy Ghost." That is to say, they entered into a covenant change of Privilege, by means of which they were supplied with grace to enlighten, comfort, and strengthen them to the end of their Christian course.

Let us now say a few words generally about each of these two last changes.

1st. *The change of State which was conferred*

upon them by Baptism.[h] This is here summed up in the briefest and most general language possible,—viz., as a state of forgiveness; *i. e.*, of assured acceptance before God. The same promise was also made to Saul of Tarsus in relation to his baptism;—"Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins." (Acts. xxii. 16.) This change of state, therefore (whatever it involves) certainly connects itself with the administration of Baptism; and is one which neither repentance nor faith of themselves have any exclusive power to bestow. The penitent and believing soul which remains unbaptized may be fairly said, indeed, to hold all the right and title to this covenant blessing, by virtue of the work of God's Spirit in its inward renewal. But the authoritative assignment of that blessing can never be ordinarily made over to it without admission into the covenant by Baptism. Luther held this view, although no one more powerfully advocated the simple doctrine of justification by faith alone without the works of the law. He says—"All they which are baptized have put on

[h] The reader must remember throughout that Baptism is only spoken of on the supposition that it is being *rightly received.*

Christ. The righteousness of the law, or of our own works is not given unto us in baptism; but Christ Himself is our garment. Now, Christ is no law, no law-giver, no work; but a divine and inestimable gift, whom God hath given unto us that He might be our Justifier, our Saviour, and our Redeemer. Wherefore to be apparelled with Christ according to the Gospel is not to be apparelled with the law, nor with works, but with an incomparable gift; that is to say, with remission of sins."[1] Thus our public, covenant, authoritative, and assured investiture of pardon, though previously secured by justifying faith alone, is to be officially attributed in an ecclesiastical sense to Baptism.

This is Calvin's view also; for arguing, in one place, against the notion that Baptism had power of itself to procure remission of sins apart from faith, he says: — "The centurion, after he had been previously endued with the graces of the Holy Spirit, was baptized for the remission of sins—not seeking a fuller forgiveness from Baptism, but a surer exercise of faith; nay, an argu-

[1] Luther, on Gal. iii. 27.

ment for assurance from a pledge."[j] And again, in another place: "It is His will that all who have believed be baptized for the remission of sins. Hence those who have thought that Baptism is nothing else than the badge and mark by which we profess our religion before men, in the same way as soldiers attest their profession by bearing the insignia of their commander, have not attended to what was the principal thing in Baptism; and this is, that we are to receive it in connection with the promise—"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.'"[k]

Assuming, then, that those Pentecostal converts were first renewed in heart by the Holy Ghost, and afterwards baptized into a state of recognized acceptance and justification before God, let us consider—

2nd. *The further change of Privilege which was conferred upon them by Baptism.* This is expressed in immediate connection with the same events—"And ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

It will be said, perhaps, that this gift had been

[j] Calvin's Institutes. Book iv., chapter xv., sec. 15.

[k] Calvin's Institutes. Book iv., chapter xv., sec. 1.

already bestowed in the repentance and faith professed before Baptism, inasmuch as neither of these can ever exist without the Spirit of God. The remark is perfectly true; consequently, "this gift of the Holy Ghost," promised especially *after* Baptism, must be, in some way or other, distinguishable from the former. Not, however, by the gift of His miraculous influences; otherwise, the promise would have no relation to ourselves, whereas it is distinctly said—"The promise is to you and to your children, and to all that are afar off, and to as many as the Lord our God shall call." In what respect, then, did this baptismal gift of the Holy Ghost differ from that previous gift of Him by means of which the multitude had repented of their sins? We reply, "*It was a gift of covenant privilege.*" When they were convinced of sin by the Holy Ghost, and brought to believe in Jesus as the true Messiah, that was indeed the gift of the Spirit in one great office of His work; but in a manner totally unconnected with any covenant promise to continue and sustain that work. It bestowed upon them no covenant privilege of indwelling grace, no covenant gift of constraining and co-operating influence for the purpose of

developing the good work begun,—but by Baptism that was bestowed. They then received the Spirit of God, not in an isolated, abnormal manner, without any promise of His continuing with them, but as a gift of covenant privilege, by means of which they had every aid vouchsafed them for running along their heavenly race and winning the final victory.

That these words—"And ye shall receive the Holy Ghost," conveyed some such covenant promise of the indwelling of the Spirit, is confessed even by the best Nonconformist writers. Howe, for example, when speaking on Acts ii. 37, 38, in his "Living Temple," writes as follows—"Repent and be baptized every one of you, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the Holy Ghost, for the promise is to you and to your children." As much as to say—"The great promise of the Gospel covenant is that of the gift of the Holy Ghost; it doth not promise you worldly wealth, or ease, or riches, or honours; but it promises you that God will be no longer a stranger to you, refuse your converse, withhold his Spirit from you,—your souls shall no longer lie waste and desolate. But as He hath mercifully approached your spirits, to make them habitable and fit to receive so great and holy

an Intimate, and to your reception whereof nothing but unremitted sin could be any obstruction; as upon your closing with the terms of the Gospel covenant by a sincere believing intuition towards Him whom you have pierced, and resolving to become Christians, whereof your being baptized, and therein taking on Christ's badge and cognizance, will be the fit and enjoined sign and token, and by which federal rite remission shall be openly confirmed and solemnly sealed unto you; so, by that remission of sin the bar is removed, and nothing can hinder the Holy Ghost from entering to take possession of your souls as His own temple and dwelling-place."[1]

Calvin also allows to the Sacraments an office of grace, by increasing and confirming our faith. He says—"With regard to the increase and confirmation of faith, I would remind the reader that in assigning this office to the Sacraments, it is not as if I thought that there is a kind of secret efficacy perpetually inherent in them, by which they can of themselves promote or strengthen faith; but because our Lord has instituted them for the express purpose of helping to establish and

[1] The Living Temple. Part ii., chapter xi.

increase our faith. The Sacraments duly perform their office only when accompanied by the Spirit, the internal Master, whose energy alone penetrates the heart, stirs up the affections, and procures access for the Sacraments into our souls."[m]

To the same effect our holy martyr, Bradford, of ever blessed memory, says—"As, therefore, in Baptism is given unto us the Holy Ghost and pardon of our sins, which yet lie not lurking in the water; so, in the Lord's Supper, is given unto us the Communion of Christ's body and blood; that is, grace," &c.[n]

When we can thus put together, Luther, Calvin, Bradford, and Howe, whose views on evangelical doctrine are so thoroughly well known, and show that they alike agreed in ascribing a general impartation of grace through Baptism to all those who received it rightly, it may well be wondered why it is that this doctrine is now deemed unevangelical. Nothing can be a much plainer proof than this, of how unconsciously many modern theologians have departed from the Catholic and Evangelical doctrine of Baptism.

[m] Calvin's Institutes. Book iv., chapter xiv., section 9.

[n] Bradford's Works, p. 90. Parker & Son.

CHAPTER III.

COVENANT BLESSINGS ATTACHED TO THE RIGHT RECEPTION OF ADULT BAPTISM.

(Treated more particularly.)

THE previous considerations are merely useful, as leading us up to a discussion of this important subject, in connection with the great questions of regeneration, the new birth, incorporation into Christ, sanctification, adoption, election, and sacramental grace: questions, which we shall now proceed to in their order. The reader must, however, clearly understand that we are still referring to the primal and normal case of Adult Baptism in Acts ii., which pre-supposes the presence of true repentance and faith; or, in other words, which assumes a renewal of the heart, and its possession of elemental spiritual life, *before* the administration of the sacrament. Thus, the effect of Baptism is not to be traced in the direction of a spiritual

change of Nature, but in the direction of a spiritual change of State, or relationship to God, and of new covenant gifts, and Privileges consequent thereon, which enlarge and perfect the new life already attained.

Keeping this in view, we enter first on the much debated topic of Regeneration, in its relation to Adults.

SECTION I.

REGENERATION.

Which is shown, in the case of Adults, to be a federal change of State, confirming and establishing a previous spiritual awakening to life, or an elementary newness of Nature.

A clear and well-defined separation of these two changes, the one being federal, and the other moral, is fundamentally important, and lies at the root of half our melancholy divisions upon this subject. Among all the Nonconformists, and among some of the Evangelical Clergy, this word Regeneration is exclusively used in relation to the latter change; being uniformly treated as synonymous with the renovation of our moral nature, and its conversion from the love and practice of actual sin. That the full blessings of Adult Regeneration imply the

previous existence of this moral renovation, will presently be seen; but to say that Regeneration means actually renovation, we believe to be neither scriptural, nor agreeable to the doctrine of the true Catholic Church. The ancient Fathers taught that all believing Adults were Regenerated by being admitted to a federal change of state in Baptism; and if at any time they spoke of Regeneration as a moral change of nature, it was not on the ground of these terms being synonymous, but only of their being properly associated to represent the fulness of the covenant blessing. We must now refer this question, however, to Scripture; an outline of the argument from which may be found in the experience of the Pentecostal Adults. These converts having, as we have already seen, repentance and faith, were in possession of renovation, or renewal of heart before Baptism; they were not, however, at that time, Regenerate in the scripture sense of the word, as we shall proceed to prove; that word being inseparable from the Sacrament of Baptism. This is the position adopted by the Church of England; for if we look to the "Service for the Baptism of those who are of riper years," it will be found that

renovation of moral character through repentance, is most clearly separated from regeneration. Nothing can be clearer than, that though the parties coming to be baptized are admitted to Baptism only on condition of their possessing repentance and faith, they are nevertheless treated as unregenerate until the sacrament has been administered. Prayer is first made for these persons, that they *may* be blessed with "spiritual regeneration;" and not until Baptism is over do we find it said—"Seeing these persons *are* regenerate." Thus, conversion, or our primary renovation of heart, by repentance and faith, is considered one thing; while our Regeneration is considered another. The first is demanded of Adults *before* Baptism; the second can only be brought about *through* Baptism. The view which the Church of England here takes of regeneration in Adult Baptism, is therefore evidently that of a change of spiritual State or standing before God, consequent upon, and confirmatory of a renewed condition of heart, already bestowed by the Holy Spirit. The idea involved seems to be that, as the person coming to be baptized naturally inherits the condemnation due to original sin, and all the consequences

of the curse; and, as notwithstanding his repentance and faith, he is not yet a recognised partaker of covenant salvation, under which alone this curse and condemnation can be authoritatively removed; he presents himself for Baptism, as the only appointed means by which he has any divine power of entering into the Christian Covenant. Having entered into which, he is thereby at once transferred from his old state in the first Adam, to a new state in the second Adam; losing the inheritance of nature, and immediately enjoying the inheritance and privileges of grace. This idea of Regeneration is so very different from the idea attached to it by many persons, that so long as they each use the word in an opposite sense, it is obvious they can have no common ground for argument.

But what saith the Scripture? The exact word "Regeneration" occurs but twice, and of these two cases, one only is in point, viz., Titus iii. 5; because the other, Mat. xix. 28, has no proper reference to individual conversion or salvation. Now in the passage to be considered, we have regeneration directly connected with the word "bath," or bathing place; its true translation being—"Ac-

cording to His mercy He saved us, by the 'bath' of regeneration, and the renewal of the Holy Ghost." Upon which passage we remark:—

1st. That it is a comparatively modern interpretation to disconnect this word λουτρόν from Baptism. An opposite interpretation is enforced by the whole mass of ecclesiastical authorship for the first sixteen or seventeen centuries. Even in the great Reformation period there was scarcely a champion of Protestantism who did not unhesitatingly affirm it. We find it in the writings of Luther and Calvin, of Cranmer, Ridley, and Jewell, and of many others, whose names we dearly love and venerate; so commonly indeed, that we think it needless to quote them.

2nd. That the two words, "Regeneration" (παλιγγενεσία), and "renewal" (ἀνακάινωσις), are here kept quite distinct; regeneration being evidently a thing given once, and never repeated; while renewal, as the name imports, is an internal operation of the Holy Ghost, and is repeated continually. Upon the latter point all parties are agreed. The question we have to decide is, whether, in the Scripture use of the word regeneration we have any ground for believing that it must

necessarily be regarded as the true renewal of heart by the Holy Ghost. We affirm the opposite, maintaining that although renewal, in the case of Adults, is always being repeated after regeneration, it nevertheless dates its earliest working on the soul of an unbaptized Adult, *before* the washing of regeneration is bestowed. To prove this, let us inquire what word the Scriptures employ to describe the power of the Holy Ghost in producing μετάνοια, or repentance. Is it any form of παλιγγενεσία? or is it some form of ἀνακάινωσις? If the former, we must necessarily conclude that Regeneration is simply a change of inward nature, answerable to conversion, being the commencement of that great renovation of heart, which afterwards needs to be constantly sustained by the "renewing of the Holy Ghost." If the latter, we shall necessarily infer that, as the "renewing of the Holy Ghost" produces μετάνοια, or change of mind, and there can be nothing earlier in Christian experience than that change, the παλιγγενεσία must refer to something which follows afterwards. Now, strange to say, there is but one passage in which μετάνοια or repentance, is directly referred to, in connection with the power that pro-

duces such a change of heart; and in that passage the word employed is unmistakably ἀνακαινίζω. We find it in Heb. vi. 6, where the Apostle says —"It is impossible for those who were once enlightened, etc., if they shall fall away, to *renew* them *again* unto repentance." (πάλιν ἀνακαινίζειν εἰς μετάνοιαν.) The force of the word *again* in this passage clearly justifies us in applying ἀνακαινίζω to the production of that original μετάνοια, upon the profession of which these Hebrew converts had been already baptized. (Acts ii. 38.) In other words, they were first "*renewed* unto repentance," not *regenerated* unto repentance: and we therefore conclude that their regeneration was distinct from their renewal, and followed it. This view is confirmed by an analysis of those places in the New Testament, where the renewal of our inward nature to holiness is avowedly spoken of, and cannot be otherwise understood; such as Rom. xii. 2, 2 Cor. iv. 17, and Col. iii. 10, in none of which texts do we find any form of παλιγγενεσία, but another word altogether,—viz., ἀνακαίνωσις, or some form of ἀνακαίνοω. Had any form of παλιγγενεσία been found in even one of these passages, of course the distinction for which we are now

contending would no longer exist; then we should have felt ourselves at liberty to talk about the "regeneration of our minds," in Rom. xii. 2; the "regeneration of our inward man," in 2 Cor. iv. 16; and our "regeneration in knowledge," in Col. iii. 10; but as it is, the words regeneration and renewal are kept quite distinct both in the Greek and the English.

Still having in view, therefore, the case of the unbaptized Adult, who has been already blessed with the grace of repentance and faith, we conclude that he is not regenerated, in the proper sense of the word, by the commencement of this inward moral renovation and awakening to spiritual life, but by what takes place afterwards. We believe indeed with the universal church up to the days of English Nonconformity, that the true regeneration of an Adult can only take place when his nature thus renovated, and his spiritual life thus quickened, have been established by the gifts of God's covenant grace in Baptism; and when, having been formally admitted into new spiritual relationship with God, he has obtained a full right and title to all church privileges.

Viewed in this manner, the "bathing place of

regeneration" (λουτρὸν παλιγγενεσία) becomes at once intelligible; whereas, on the other ground of view, it introduces a confusion of ideas between regeneration and renovation—*i. e.*, between our change in spiritual state, and change in moral nature—which is not only perplexing to the mind, but has no sanction from Scripture.

Dr. Waterland, in his celebrated sermon on this subject, alludes to this distinction, saying—"Regeneration is a kind of renewal, but then it is of the spiritual state, considered at large; whereas, renovation seems to mean a more particular kind of renewal, namely, of the inward frame, or disposition of man."[o]

Nor will there be any refutation of this meaning of the word παλιγγενεσία if we examine the other passage in which it occurs; viz., Matt. xix. 28.

For while it is true that by the punctuation of our authorized version, this word denotes the change which our Lord will relatively effect in His church, when He shall have reconstituted it in a state of glory at His second advent; and that

[o] See Bishop Bethel also, on Regeneration; also, Archbishop Laurence on "the Doctrine of the Church of England, on the efficacy of Baptism, vindicated from misrepresentation."—Part ii., page 22—26.

therefore it may signify a change of spiritual Nature in respect to the resurrection-body, fully as much as a change of spiritual State, perfecting and glorifying a nature which has already passed through its first great spiritual change; yet it must be remembered that this is not the only possible way of reading the verse. If we punctuate it as some do, by placing a comma after the word "me," then "regeneration" will be used to denote the change which Christ was relatively bringing about in His church when He reconstituted it under the Gospel, and transferred it from a state of law to a state of grace. But if so, how can we understand Regeneration to be a change of moral Nature? Was this kind of change anything peculiar to the church of the New Testament? Not at all. "Newness of life," "conversion of heart," "renewal of the moral and spiritual affections"—call it what you like—had ever been the pathway to salvation, even under the Old Testament. All the true children of God among the ancient Israelites had felt the necessity of this great change of moral Nature, this inward cleansing of the heart. Witness David's cry, when he said—"Create in me a clean heart, O

God; and renew a right spirit within me. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise." (Psalm li. 10, 17.) Witness, again, the command of the law for a "spiritual circumcision of the heart," in Deut. x. 16; and the promise of the Lord to all such as have it, in Psalm lxxiii. 1—"Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart." Witness it also in that wonderful expression of Solomon's, where he entreats God to listen to the cry of those who knew "the plague of their own heart." (1 Kings viii. 38.) And, finally, witness it in that beautiful prayer of the Psalmist,—"I will run the way of Thy commandments, when Thou shalt enlarge my heart." (Psalm cxix. 32.) From all this we think it clear that the necessity of a renovation of heart as the gift of God Himself, was a doctrine well understood by the more enlightened portion of Israel under the Old Testament. It is true that Ezekiel speaks to Israel of the promise of a "new heart and a new spirit" (chap. xxxvi. 26), and Jeremiah, of the "writing of God's law in their hearts" (chap. xxxi. 33), as if these things were to be a peculiar gift of the new covenant; but this is

explained by St. Paul, in Heb. viii., where he shows that it was the *perpetuity* and *indefectible character* of the Church's sanctification which the new covenant guaranteed, and not its first bestowal. The necessity of an inward moral purification had always been known and felt; but it was no part of the Old Testament covenant to guarantee the perpetuity of it to the nation of Israel. The Gospel came, however, with a different form of covenant; not only promising to bestow the grace of moral renewal, but to preserve it in the Church to the end. We argue, therefore, that παλιγγενεσία could not have been used to express this moral or spiritual renewal of nature in Matt. xix. 28, because the fact of such a renewal was no new feature in the establishment of Christianity; whereas the παλιγγενεσία, or "regeneration" of the church was such. Let us however give this word the other meaning, and we shall see that it falls exactly under its proper signification in this passage; because it then describes the actual change which Christ *did* effect by the Gospel,—namely, the introduction of the church into a new federal State or relationship to God, by which its nature, already renewed, became invested with new covenant privileges, and

was more and more conformed to the Divine image.

If we are asked, therefore, whether we believe in Adult Baptismal Regeneration, we reply—"It depends upon what is meant by the term." If regeneration be understood as synonymous with renovation of the heart through repentance and faith, then we do *not* believe it to be effected by Baptism. On the other hand, if it be taken to imply the spiritual transfer of a soul which has already believed and repented of sin, from its natural state of outlawry and alienship, into that condition of covenant mercy and good will by which God consents, for Christ's sake, to bestow upon it the gifts and privileges of grace, thereby confirming and establishing the newness of life already imparted, then we *do* hold the doctrine. And it is in this sense only that the Church of England holds it.

SECTION II.

THE NEW BIRTH.

Which is shown, in the case of Adults, to be a change of spiritual State, following a change of moral Nature.

THE same remark may be made on this subject which was previously made about Regeneration; namely, that the Church of England invariably connects it with Baptism. For in the Service which is meant for those of riper years, although the person coming to be baptized is obliged to profess true repentance and faith, and thus give evidence of a renewal or renovation of heart commenced by the Holy Spirit, yet he is not declared "born again," until after the Sacrament has been administered. Thus he is first supposed to be the subject of converting grace; and then, being baptized into covenant relationship with God, he is brought by a new birth into recognized membership with Christ and the Church.

It is not affirmed by this that Baptism and the new birth are absolutely synonymous terms; so

that every one who receives that sacrament, whatever be his disqualifications for so doing, is, properly speaking, born again. All it affirms is, that whatever the qualifications of an adult candidate for Baptism may be—no matter how far he may have been previously renewed by divine grace—yet he cannot be rightly credited with having attained to the new birth until, in addition to this elementary change of inward nature, he has also been admitted by Baptism into a further change of covenant State by which he is sacramentally united to Christ. We believe that both of these positions can be abundantly proved from Scripture.

The first text we must consider is that found in John iii. 5: "Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God;" which we unhesitatingly affirm to refer to Baptism.

There can be no question that the voice of catholic antiquity, as well as that of almost all the Protestant Reformers, is in favour of this interpretation. Hooker says—"Of all the ancients, there is not one to be named that ever did otherwise either expound or allege this place than as implying external Baptism." (Eccl. Pol. Book v.

ch. 59.) If it were necessary we might easily string together a long chain of quotations in proof of this assertion, beginning with Justin Martyr, who lived in the generation immediately succeeding St. John, and ending with Augustine, the greatest evangelical writer of the fifth, or perhaps any century in the Christian Church. Nor would the testimony of either British and foreign Reformers be any the less decided. Luther, Bucer, and Melancthon would alike bear witness to it from the continent; while Cranmer, Ridley, Jewell, and Bacon, would abundantly confirm it upon our own shores. Indeed, we have the strongest indirect evidence for believing that the Presbyterian Commissioners, who took exceptions against the Book of Common Prayer at the Savoy Conference in 1661, held a similar opinion. For, while they objected most strongly to various parts of our Baptismal Ritual, we cannot find that they took exception to the first exhortation, in which our Lord's conversation with Nicodemus is expressly viewed in relation to the Sacrament. (*See Cardwell's History of the Conferences.*) This is very different to the accusations of modern Dissent, which impeach any statement of this kind as un-

scriptural, dangerous, and deadly. When we hear such denunciations, we naturally ask whether it is likely that the Church of Christ could have thus yielded its concurrent testimony through fifteen hundred years to an unscriptural opinion? Is it a circumstance *a priori* probable? Again, is it conceivable that those who laid down their lives at the Reformation for the authority of Scripture, could have been either ignorant of or indifferent to the teaching of Scripture, on this most primary doctrine? And is it seemly or right that these views of our Protestant martyrs should be branded by their ungrateful children as false and heretical?

Let us inquire, then, on what ground they rest. We have every reason to believe that the Jews in our Lord's day when they received a Gentile proselyte, not only administered to him circumcision, but Baptism. So commonly was this done that the Ethiopic version of Matthew xxiii. 15, has it written—"Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to *baptize* one proselyte." The Rabbinical writers trace back this practice to a very remote date. Indeed, it is hard to conceive how some ceremony of that kind could have been absent from the Jewish Church;

for otherwise it would have had no initiatory rite for the reception of its female proselytes into the covenant. Moreover, the language of the New Testament carefully considered suggests the existence of this practice. For when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to John the Baptist, to ask him who he was, they said—"Why baptizest thou, then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, nor that prophet?" (John i. 25.) In which words, they evidently recognized the custom of baptism, and only expressed surprise at the fact of John's venturing to administer it to true-born Israelites, thereby treating them like proselytes to a new religion. Stier says,—"All considerate criticism must admit that some rite of washing, corresponding with the later baptism of proselytes was already extant when John appeared, or otherwise John's Baptism would lose its most significant point of connection."

We have no less reason for believing that at the baptism of proselytes, this change of religion, or entrance into the Jewish covenant, was connected with the language of the 87th Psalm, where converts from Babylon, Philistia, and Ethiopia, are prophetically described as being born in Zion. "I

will make mention of Rahab and Babylon to them that know me; behold Philistia, and Tyre, with Ethiopia: this man was born there. And of Zion it shall be said, This and that man was born in her." (Psalm lxxxvii. 4, 5.) At all events, the language which the ancient Jews used concerning these proselytes was very striking: "If any one become a proselyte, he is like a child new born." They spoke of the proselyte as a little child, and of baptism as a new birth. (*See Lightfoot's Harmony, Exer. on* John iii.)

Hence, when our Lord declared to Nicodemus —"Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John iii. 3), it was equivalent to His saying that *every* man, whether a pious Jew, or an idolatrous Gentile, must be born again into a new state of covenant acceptance and reconciliation with God. He doubtless traced in the heart of Nicodemus that carnal expectation so generally indulged in among the Jews, by which they took it for granted that every circumcised son of Abraham could claim a natural right to a place in the Messiah's kingdom. Our Lord, therefore, immediately disabused him of this notion, by telling him that no kind of natural birth could entitle him

to so great a privilege; that he must have his heart turned completely from this ground of hope to higher and more spiritual views of truth; and that, under a deep conviction of these views, he must consent to be "born" into His kingdom, exactly like one belonging to any other nation. He informed him, in point of fact, that the terms of his admission into the Gospel kingdom no longer involved a question as between Jew and Gentile, but a question as between the spiritual death of all mankind, and their birth into a totally new state of covenant salvation. It was this unexpected description of the new birth which staggered the faith of Nicodemus, and which appeared so deeply mysterious to him, that it led him into the ridiculous question—"How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?" (John iii. 4.) Either his surprise here was so great that he took leave, for the moment, of his senses; or he felt so convinced of his sinfulness, that he purposely asked a foolish question, in order to parry off the thrust from his conscience. Our blessed Lord, therefore, immediately repeated what he had said, only with still greater emphasis,—"Except a man be born

of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John iii. 5); giving him, by the mention of the word "water," no loophole for escaping from the necessity of an admission into the Messianic kingdon by Baptism, on the same level with the Gentile world.[p] And this He strengthened still more by what followed,—"That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit." As though He had said —"It matters not whether a man be Jew or Gentile, he is, in either case, naturally born of the flesh, and a partaker both of the condemnation and infection which are due to original sin; hence, he must be born again; his State as regards condemnation, and his Nature as regards infection, both being radically changed. When that is done, he is "born of the Spirit," and is spiritual; but till then, he is born only of the flesh, and is "fleshly." Nor should Nicodemus have been ignorant of this doctrine; for, to say nothing of many other passages which might be referred to, Ezekiel

[p] It is remarkable that this discourse stands in the same relation to Baptism that the discourse in John vi. does to the Lord's Supper; both refer to the sacrament; yet, in neither case, were they distinctly mentioned, because not yet officially instituted.

had most expressly testified that the Jewish people were thus to be passed by "water and the Spirit" into the coming kingdom of Messiah. "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; a new heart also, will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will put My Spirit within you." (Ezekiel xxxvi. 24—27.) Nicodemus, therefore, well merited the rebuke—"Art thou a master in Israel, and knowest not these things?" For here we observe the exact combination of ideas which our Lord had been propounding to him—viz., Water, and the Holy Ghost; and both in immediate connection with a change of heart, on entrance into the Messianic kingdom.

In this review of the passage, the doctrine of Adult New Birth, undoubtedly includes an inward renovation of heart; but it adds to it the necessity of an entrance into a new state or covenant, by the "washing of regeneration." And this double idea is essential to the very metaphor, if we analyze it; for what is natural birth, but a double change of this kind? First, there is the inward quickening to life of that which had been either dead, or non-existent previously; secondly, there

is the outward manifestation of that life, when brought by parturition into a new state of existence, by which the life already formed, becomes established. Such is our new birth spiritually, when we regard it in connection with adult believers. First, comes the Word of God, awakening the soul which before was dead in trespasses and sins, and quickening it into spiritual life; secondly comes Baptism, transferring the soul which was before under the curse of the law, into a covenant of grace, and causing it to enter into a new spiritual state or standing before God, by which its life, already awakened, becomes established. Under this double view of the case, we retain a very close and beautiful analogy between the image of the natural, and the new birth. But by making the new birth of an Adult to be merely an inward renovation of nature, without adding to it its necessary concomitant of external Baptism, all the beauty and propriety of the metaphor is lost.

The same remarks may be made of the expression "new creation," which is derived entirely from the idea of our new birth. Speaking of an adult, the "new creation in Christ" must first be

formed inwardly, by the quickening life of the Holy Ghost; after which, it must be manifested outwardly and relatively, through a change or transfer of state into God's covenant, by Baptism. Nor is the "new creation" complete, until both these changes are effected.

In thus holding up Adult believer's Baptism, however, as one imperative condition without which no professor of Christianity can be properly considered "born again," we often have a class of texts urged against us, such as the following—"Every one that doeth righteousness is born of God." (1 John ii. 29.) "Every one that loveth is born of God." (1 John iv. 7.) "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God." (1 John v. 1.) To which we reply, that the presence of Baptism must be understood in all these passages; because the Apostle was avowedly addressing baptized persons, and those only. These texts amply show, indeed, that a man baptized, who is living, notwithstanding, in habitual sin, can never be properly credited with the new birth.[q] But the con-

[q] So says Augustine. "Let a man attend to his heart, whether that be there perfected which has been done in his body. Let him see whether he has charity, and then let him

verse does not follow. They do not at all prove that a man who lives in habitual faith and righteousness, but who, notwithstanding, remains unbaptized, ought to be credited with the new birth. How would it be possible? For without receiving Baptism, which is so plainly commanded as one condition of salvation (where it may be had, Mark xvi. 16), the man's righteousness would become disobedience, and his faith unbelief. The presence of his faith and righteousness would therefore involve, by the very nature of the case, a reception of Baptism as a part and parcel of themselves. And the fact that St. John made no allusion to it in these texts has no force whatever.

It is also often alleged that the new birth can have nothing necessarily to do with Baptism, because St. Peter distinctly attributes the origin of it to something else. "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the *Word of God*, which liveth and abideth for ever." (1 Peter i. 23.) Just so. For the Word of God

say—'I have been born of God.' If he have not, he bears indeed an outward mark impressed upon him; but he only wanders about as a deserter. Let him have charity; otherwise, let him not say that he has been born of God."—*Quoted from Faber's Primitive Doctrine of Regeneration*, p. 226.

with these converts was prior to Baptism; yet it did not exclude Baptism on that account, but, on the contrary, led to it. For, in the first place, it was through the Word of God, blessed to their hearts by the Holy Ghost, that these converts received repentance and faith; and, in the next place, it was no less through the Word of God that they were afterwards baptized. (Matt. xxviii. 19, and Mark xvi. 16.) When our Lord said—"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," it became quite as correct to affirm that we are *baptized* through the Word of God, as that we *believe* through the Word. The question of our new birth through the Word, therefore, stands equally related to both of these, and neither of them can claim the pre-eminence.

SECTION III.

ON BEING "IN CHRIST," BY INGRAFTING AND INCORPORATION.

Which is shown, in the case of Adults, to be either a spiritual change both of State and Nature, abiding to the end of life; or a spiritual change of State only, capable of being finally lost if unattended by a corresponding change of Nature.

(1.) "*INGRAFTING.*"

A LARGE number of persons, mainly represented by our Nonconformist bodies, expressly maintain that Baptism has nothing whatever to do with the ingrafting a soul into Christ; that this is entirely due to the secret operations of the Holy Spirit, by means of which, faith, taking hold on the divine word, and appropriating the work and promises of redemption, brings us at once into full and perfect union with the Saviour.

The peculiarity of this statement is, that it contains a proportion of what is both true and false; the cause of the contrariety consisting in a forgetfulness of the two divisions which belong to our

work of restoration under grace, and to which we have been all along referring in the pages already written,—viz., our moral change of heart, and our covenant change of state. If ingrafting into Christ only expresses this moral change of heart, then, upon the principles already laid down in reference to adults, it cannot necessarily be dependent on Baptism; if, on the other hand, it represents our transfer from condemnation under sin, into a covenant change of state, by which we are promised pardoning grace, then it must be inseparable from that sacrament.

How shall we decide this? We begin by asking whether our ingrafting into Christ is traceable in the Word of God, to any definite cause? And, if so, what expressions are employed to describe the way by which it is effected?

In replying to these questions, we shall of course except that pre-ordaining and primeval cause to which St. Paul alludes, when he says—"He hath chosen us *in Him* before the foundation of the world" (Eph. i. 4); because the true question before us is not the remote origin of our being ingrafted into Christ, but the practical means by which God is pleased to bring about His purposes. Now,

touching these, we have one chief passage to be guided by, the force and importance of which can never be overrated, and the recollection of which should always be vividly before us in reading all other parts of the New Testament; we refer to Mark xvi. 16,—"He that believeth, and is baptized shall be saved; and he that believeth not shall be damned." In which view, although eternal condemnation is based entirely upon the want of faith, not Baptism; yet the gift of salvation is promised only to faith conjoined with Baptism. This, however, is not brought out so clearly in all places; as for example, in Acts xvi. 31, where salvation is attributed to faith alone. Was then, this additional condition of Baptism, as a general pre-requisite for salvation, when imposed by Christ in Mark xvi. 16, a mere redundancy and meaningless superfluity? Ought we not to explain the shorter statement by the fuller and more comprehensive one? Instead of saying that faith is the *only* essential for salvation, while Baptism is simply a ceremonial adjunct, ought we not to understand that the two are *conjointly* essential? Instead of frittering away our Lord's larger teaching in order to bring it within the

smaller compass of what St. Paul taught the Philippian jailor, is it not more reverent as well as reasonable, to enlarge the more condensed teaching of St. Paul, for the purpose of bringing it up to the full dimensions of what our Lord dogmatically delivered to His apostles? In other words, if faith among adults be *primarily* necessary for salvation, Baptism, where it may be had, must be *conjointly* necessary also; otherwise it would not have been laid down as the fundamental rule of Christianity,—"He that believeth, AND is baptized shall be saved."

But in what way does this bear upon our present subject? Obviously. For salvation must needs involve a full and perfect union with the Lord Jesus; consequently, if both faith and Baptism be needful for one, they are needful for the other. But full and perfect union with the Lord Jesus Christ consists of two parts,—viz., union with His life, and with His death. Hence faith and Baptism must be fouud, in the New Testament, to stand inseparably connected with our ingrafting into both of these. Let us now see what part each of these instruments takes in the process of ingrafting.

The point we propose to exhibit is this, that while the means by which we first become sharers in the life of Christ is faith alone, that by which, as believing Adults, we are ingrafted into recognised covenant participation with His life and death, is Baptism; this being the divinely appointed relationship in which they stand to one another, for the regulation of the life of the Church on earth, and the furtherance of God's eternal counsels.

In proof of this, we remark, that our blessed Lord invariably represented Himself as first quickening His disciples, by communicating to them the life of faith; for which reason He was called by St. Paul, a "quickening Spirit." (1 Cor. xv.) And our Lord himself says—"He that *believeth* on the Son *hath* everlasting life." (John iii. 36.) In other words, adult believers, even before Baptism, are sharers of the life of Christ by faith; and in that sense, therefore, may be held to have some kind of initial union with Him, prior to their reception of the sacrament. But this union is incoherent and imperfect in comparison with that which comes after. It is secret, private, invisible, without any covenant promise of establishment,

and not fully recognisable in the Church as a state of salvation, in as much as the promise of that only runs upon the junction of faith *with* Baptism. "He that believeth *and* is baptized shall be saved." Let Baptism, however, follow the faith of these adult converts, and then their whole standing and relationship to God, becoming altered by means of covenant union with the death of Christ, they will find this union with His death the unfailing spring of fresh supplies of the life of Christ, afterwards. Thus the believer's ingrafting into Christ is not properly speaking his renewal of nature, but his transfer of soul into a new spiritual state of grace and privilege, flowing from covenant participation with the atonement. And this is just how St. Paul puts it,—"Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized *into* Jesus Christ, were baptized *into* His death?" (Rom. vi. 3, 4.) That is to say, they then and there passed, through believing Baptism, *into* Christ; entering into all the covenant privileges and consequences of His atonement, and thereby becoming more surely and fully than ever, sharers in the blessings of the divine life which had been previously imparted. This view is also confirmed by what St. Peter said in

Acts ii. 38,—"Repent, *and be baptized* for the remission of sins." Also by what Ananias said in Acts xxii. 12,—Arise, *and be baptized*, and wash away thy sins." Observe, we do not say that this ingrafting into Christ had not been an established fact in the mind and purpose of God before the administration of Baptism; that is not the question; all we maintain is, that having regard to their position as covenant members of the Church of God upon earth, the believing reception of Baptism by these persons, was the instrumentality by which they became effectually and authoritatively ingrafted into Christ's death, and by which they became practically assured of their title to the enjoyment of everlasting life.

If we are asked, therefore, what is the instrumental cause of an adult being ingrafted into Christ, we reply, faith, in the first instance, and Baptism in the next; maintaining, on the authority of Christ Himself, in Mark xvi. 16, that while neither can be separated from the other, each performs the part which has just been described. Nor is this in any way inconsistent with Evangelical teaching. Bradford, the martyr, whose strong Calvinistic views are well known, scrupled not to

say—"As by Baptism we are *ingrafted into Christ*, so by the Supper we are fed by Christ."[r] So, indeed, Calvin himself,—"Baptism is the initiatory sign by which we are admitted to the fellowship of the Church, that being *ingrafted into Christ*, we may be accounted children of God."[s]

The confession of other Evangelical Churches is just as plain. Take the French confession of faith, for instance:—"Baptism is given us to testify our adoption, because that therein we are *ingrafted into Christ*." (Art. 35.) We may even go to the old Scotch kirk divines, and find the same doctrine. Thus, Boston, when summing up the benefits of Baptism, begins by saying—"These benefits are—(1.) *Ingrafting into Christ*, or union with Him. (Gal. iii. 27.) We are naturally branches of the old Adam, from whom we can derive nothing but sin and the curse. Christ, the second Adam, is the true vine, into which we are ingrafted, or to whom we are united. (John xv. 5.) The Spirit is the ingrafter, who, by the knife of the law, cuts us off from the old stock (Gal. ii. 19), and puts us into Christ, winding us up with the band of cov-

[r] Bradford's Works, page 89. (Parker Society.)

[s] Calvin's Institutes. Book iv., chapter xv., section 1.

enant grace, and causing us to knit with Him by faith. (Eph. iii. 17.) This is signified and sealed by Baptism, while so Christ does solemnly take possession of us, being baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." [t]

But this is not all. We must now discuss the expression in reference to other cases than those of decidedly renewed believers. It will be obvious to every one that many cases must have occurred in the apostolic churches where Adult Baptism, though rightly administered upon the solemn profession of repentance and faith, was yet not received unto salvation. Witness the case of Ananias and Sapphira. Nevertheless, such instances need not have been the result of hypocrisy. Many persons may have received certain intellectual convictions of the truth of Christianity, sincerely believing that Christ was the Son of God, by means of spiritual illumination, and honestly changing their minds on the subject of religion, when they embraced the Gospel; although they did not experience that renovation of heart which conformed their wills and affections to the image of Christ, and which exhibited repentance and

[t] Boston's Body of Divinity.

faith in their new spiritual character. Under such circumstances, it is an important and delicate question to settle, whether their Baptism was null and void, or whether it produced some effect, as an appointed ordinance of God, which, though not finally saving, was yet recognised by the Apostles as placing these baptized persons within a relative, if not actual, range of covenant mercies. Upon this point, Dr. Waterland says—"Even the unworthy are put into a Christian *state*, otherwise they would be as mere pagans still, and would want a new Baptism to make them Christians. Therefore, as they are by Baptism translated out of their natural state into the state of Christians, they must be supposed to have pardon, and grace, and all Gospel privileges conditionally made over to them, though not yet actually applied." [u]

This subject is a very painful one; but we cannot ignore it. At first sight it may seem to contradict the doctrine of "final perseverance," if we say that a man may be ingrafted into Christ *unavailingly*, as well as *savingly*. Yet it is only an apparent contradiction; and is a question so plainly arising out of the Word of God, that we

[u] See his Sermon on Regeneration, page 32, 33.

must look it fairly in the face. Hitherto we have discussed the effects of Adult Baptism from the standing point only of its reception by justifying faith. From this point it must be viewed more generally, because we shall now meet with certain passages of Scripture in the course of our inquiry, which will compel us to deal with it in relation to cases of an opposite nature. But upon the face and front of this position it may be asked—"Is there any room for argument? How is it possible, that any one can be ingrafted into Christ unavailingly? Is it not a contradiction in terms? How can Baptism alone, without any living, justifying faith attending it, put the person baptized into union with Christ?"

Into a living and saving union with Him, it never can. Nevertheless, we have undoubted evidence in Scripture that such a man may be placed in a relative and conditional union with Christ. It is useless to rebel against this statement, for our blessed Lord Himself makes it. "*If* a man abide not *in Me*, he is cast forth as a branch and is withered, and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned." (John xv. 6.) This language cannot be hypothetical and

beyond the reach of fulfilment; to allege such a thing would be sinful irreverence. Nor can it be set down to the account of mere profession of religion. As though our Lord had said—"If a man abide not in his profession of being in Me," etc. To deal in this slipshod method of interpretation, would be to justify Cardinal Bellarmine's celebrated saying respecting Scripture—viz., that it is a nose of wax which Protestants can twist into any shape they want. Let us then be honest with this text, and candidly allow that there must be some scriptural sense according to which even a soul may be ultimately lost, after having been once ingrafted into Christ. The question is *how?* We reply, not when ingrafted by a living faith; for otherwise souls truly justified and sanctified may be eternally lost, which in common with Hooker and Augustine we deny. In what way then? According to what we have already proved in the preceding part of this section one other instrument only remains, and that is Baptism; which, without effecting in the man any spiritual change of *nature,* may be supposed to have relatively altered his *state* or *standing* in the sight of God; bringing him into a covenant of privileges

and responsibilities, and making him a relative partaker of the benefits of grace and redemption.

This is the only ground upon which such a passage as that found in Gal. iii. 27, can be understood. "For *as many as* have been baptized *into Christ*, have *put on Christ*." Those who are acquainted with the genius of the Greek language, know very well that this translation is not idiomatically correct; that the original text employs the aorist tense in both these verbs, which, by the law of Greek grammar, makes the two actions not simply concurrent, but identical. The passage should therefore be translated, if we desire critical exactness,—"For as many as were baptized into Christ, put on Christ;" meaning that they did in that very act, then and there "put on Christ." The question is, what did the Apostle mean by this expression? There are two senses which it may sustain; the one ethical, and the other doctrinal. If we take it in an ethical sense, the passage teaches that *every* baptized person actually became a partaker of Christ's righteousness, and was clothed with His living image at the very time of Baptism. But such a statement would have been contrary to fact; for nothing can be clearer

than that the Apostles often rebuked baptized members of the Church for not having this investiture of the Lord Jesus, and certainly Simon Magus did not so "put on Christ." It remains, then, that we should take it in a doctrinal sense; —viz., that in Baptism we "put on Christ," by becoming invested with a new state or standing before God through redemption. Under this view, the passage becomes clear. "As many of you as were baptized into Christ, put on Christ in that Baptism, by becoming invested with an altered standing before God; not one or two of you, but all; there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, for ye are all one *in Christ Jesus.*"

But while this is *universally* declared of the baptized Church in a doctrinal sense, it is not so declared of it in an ethical sense. For St. Paul in writing to the Romans, distinctly exhorts them from the latter point of view, to "put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and not to make provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof." (Rom. xiii. 14.) It is most important to notice this double use of the same phrase; without which the two passages might appear contradictory.

To prove to our Nonconformist brethren that this view of Baptism is not inconsistent with Evangelical teaching, let us finally quote a great Puritan writer, Dr. Goodwin, who when speaking upon John xv. 1—8, and describing the difference between fruitful and unfruitful branches in Christ, the Vine, ascribes the ingrafting of the latter to *baptism*. And although he makes no direct allusion to this sacramental ingrafting, as altering the spiritual standing of, or conveying any spiritual privileges to, the persons there concerned; yet he practically concedes the point, by going on in the same breath to show how, after this, "Christ begins to shoot some sap of His Spirit into their hearts, quickening them with many good motions, and stirring up some juiciness of affections in the administration of the word and sacraments, which causes them to bud forth into good inward purposes and outward good beginnings,"[v] though it end not in true renewal and sanctification.

Summing up the whole, then, we infer that to be ingrafted into Christ in the fullest and most perfect

[v] "The Trial of a Christian's Growth." Introduction, vol. iii., p. 440, in Nicholls' Series of the Puritan Divines. This passage will be quoted at greater length hereafter.

sense of the term, we must have a complete enjoyment of the new birth, as explained in the previous section. That is to say, we must have union with Christ, both as regards a new nature and a new state. We must first become sharers in His life through faith; and that life must afterwards be developed still further, by our proceeding to become covenant sharers in His death through baptism. The Apostles, no doubt, often addressed the Churches to whom they wrote, as if they universally enjoyed this completed ingrafting; for example in 2 Cor. v. 17, and Rom. viii. 1. They could not but be aware, however, that while they ever demanded justifying faith before baptism, they were sometimes deceived by a spurious profession of it. In which case, though faith had not united them to the life of Christ and so changed their spiritual nature, yet baptism had ingrafted them relatively into the death of Christ, and so changed their spiritual state or standing before God. And, therefore, we never find the Apostles addressing any such persons once baptized and admitted within the Church, as if they were heathens and aliens from God; but always as under the responsibility of a covenant, and having

a positive relationship to Christ, from which, in some cases, they might possibly fall and be lost.

(2.) "*INCORPORATION.*"

If there be any truth in the foregoing reasoning, we may expect to find that as there is both a saving and an unavailing sense in which we can be ingrafted into Christ, so there is a saving and an unavailing sense in which we can have incorporation into Him. Moreover, if there be the slightest weight in what has been said concerning the former process, we shall naturally expect to find that this saving incorporation into Christ takes place among adults after the gift of repentance and faith when there has been a right reception of Baptism.

Now that this is really so, we think any candid perusal of St. Paul's twelfth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians will at once make plain. Let it only be noticed, first, that the Apostle is speaking in that chapter of the believing Church of Corinth, as the "body of Christ." He says it so plainly, that it is impossible to mistake his words. "Ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular." (1 Cor. xii. 27.) In what way,

then, does he represent these persons as having been incorporated into membership with Christ? We read it in the thirteenth verse. "By one Spirit are we all *baptized* into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free, and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." In other words, they were all made members of the body of Christ by the work of the Spirit in Baptism, and were therein united one to the other under Christ as their common Head. We limit this text now to those only who were truly renewed by the Holy Spirit because, whether its meaning is extended beyond these or not, all will agree that it must refer to them primarily. Hence we have a right to conclude that Scripture does not attribute their membership with Christ's body to the possession of their faith alone, but rather to their possession of faith and Baptism conjointly, agreeably with Mark xvi. 16.

We call this *saving* membership with Christ; because, once received, Scripture teaches that it will not finally be lost. On this point let us quote the words of the great Hooker. He says,—"Whom God hath justified, hath not Christ assured that 'it is His Father's will to give them a king-

dom?' Notwithstanding, it shall not be otherwise given them than if they continue grounded and stablished in the faith, and be not moved away from the hope of the Gospel. Our Saviour, therefore, when He spake of the sheep effectually called and truly gathered into His fold, said,—'I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of My hand.' In promising to save them, He promised no doubt to preserve them in that without which there can be no salvation, as also from that whereby it is irrecoverably lost."[w] These are the branches in the vine which abide and bring forth fruit, as distinguished from other branches which have no living union with the root, but are only nominally ingrafted or incorporated into the vine.

This brings us to the interesting though painful subject of *unavailing* membership with Christ. How the possibility of this fact can be denied we are at an utter loss to conceive; unless, indeed, it be for the mere purpose of upholding a pre-conceived system of doctrine, with which it is supposed to be inconsistent. It is evident that certain "branches" in the vine perish. (John xv. 6.) Why,

[w] See his Sermon on Justification, sect. 26.

then, should not certain "members" in the body perish? Surely there is a perfect parallelism between the two. Mind, we are not saying that these can be living and fruitful members of the body, any more than worthless boughs can be living and fruitful branches in the vine. Yet as the worthless boughs are called branches, so these worthless limbs are to be called members. Take as an example, the "false teachers" spoken of by St. Peter. They were evidently office-bearers in the Church, and must, therefore, have been necessarily accounted members in the *body* of Christ. (Comp. 1 Cor. 12, 28.) Yet what does St. Peter say of them? "Who shall privily bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction." (2 Peter ii. 1.) If this, however, be not thought sufficient proof, what can be said of St. Paul's question to the Corinthians? "Through thy knowledge, shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died?" (1 Cor. viii. 11.) If it were possible for this "brother" to perish, it is obviously possible for a "member of the body of Christ" to perish; for "brother" is merely another word for "fellow-member of the family." Or, if this be still deemed

insufficient evidence, let us return to the 12th chap. of the 1st Epistle to the Corinthians, where it is beyond doubt that the Apostle describes all those who "worked miracles" and "prophesied," as being in the "body of Christ." For they are expressly mentioned in verses 10 and 28, and in direct connection with them it is said—"Ye are the body of Christ and members in particular." (1 Cor. xii. 27.) Yet we know, upon the direct testimony of our blessed Lord, that many of these gifted members of the Church will be rejected at the last day. "Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name,[x] and in Thy name have cast out devils, and in Thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you." (Matt. vii. 22, 23.) Compare, also, 1 Cor. xiii. 1, 2. In other words, some of the "members of the body of Christ," described in 1 Cor. 12, may possibly perish at last. And if so, what is this but an unavailing incorporation into Christ Jesus? Now such persons were evidently not united to Him by saving faith. We conclude, therefore, that they can only have been incorporated into Him by Baptism, according

[x] Such cases (*e.g.*) as Judas.

to the general terms laid down in 1 Cor. 12, 13; in which case "the drinking into one Spirit," there referred to, must be understood of the Spirit's gifts (χαρίσματα) often bestowed on merely nominal Christians. Once more, however, and finally, let us refer to the sixth chapter of the same Epistle, where St. Peter speaks of the whole Church of Corinth, as in membership with Christ, saying—"Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ?" (v. 15.) Yet among "these members of Christ," he distinctly assumes that some were "fornicators," others "covetous," others "idolaters," others "railers," others "drunkards," others "extortioners." (1 Cor. v. 11.) It becomes evident, therefore, that this expression, "membership with Christ," is used in Scripture to denote incorporation into the body of Christ with regard to a regeneration of State and privilege, and that it may possibly exist without any real renovation of character and life.

SECTION IV.

SANCTIFICATION AND SAINTSHIP.

Which are shown to be not only inward and real, but outward and relative also.

LET it be continually borne in mind by the reader that the position assumed throughout this treatise is primarily that of Baptism rightly received; the presence being assumed in it of all those accompanying blessings which are promised in the Word of God. Viewed in this manner, the bearing of Sanctification on Baptism is very close. For although repentance and faith, in the case of Adults, must necessarily precede Baptism, if it is to become a true blessing to the baptized person; and although these gifts involve the commencement of inward purification, and impart the initial principle of spiritual life and holiness; yet Baptism, following these introductory gifts of grace, ingrafts the soul into Christ; establishing it in a new covenant state of life and privilege, by which the Holy

Spirit dwells in it as in His temple (see p. 21), and preserves it in an abiding state of holy life. This indwelling of Christ in our hearts is, indeed, the only pledge of our inward sanctification; which being first sealed to us by way of covenant in Baptism (see p. 22), that sacrament becomes our visible sanctification before God and the Church.

The subject may also be regarded in another way. Sanctification is not only taken for internal purification, as in 1 Thess. iv. 3; but for external consecration, as in Numbers vii. 1, and a variety of other places. That is to say, the whole Church is sanctified or set apart from the rest of the world in Jesus Christ for the service and glory of God; which again connects the word "sanctification" or "saintship" with Baptism. For while in regard to the secret purposes and counsels of God this setting apart has been done before the foundation of the world, yet in regard to the means by which God carries out His purpose, it is not only effected internally by the gifts of repentance and faith, but externally by the Sacrament of Baptism: the one means setting His people apart from the rest of mankind by purification of character; the other doing so by a visible sign and seal, which thus

becomes practically their right and title to all the ecclesiastical privileges of saintship.

As remarked, however, in the preceding section, there must have been some if not many instances in the New Testament Church, of persons who were set apart in Christ from the surrounding mass of heathenism by the rite of Baptism, on the profession of a repentance and faith, which proved, after all, only to be temporary and unavailing. In such cases it becomes important to inquire whether their lack of sanctification in its higher meaning cut them off from any right to the title of sanctification in its lower meaning. That the Apostles throughout their Epistles addressed themselves exclusively to the "saints and faithful in Christ Jesus," is clear. Did they use these terms, then, only to include those who were saints in the higher sense of the word? Or did they, while primarily speaking to such persons, allow their language to include, in a secondary and subordinate sense, others who, though relatively sanctified by Baptism, were nevertheless not sanctified really by the renovation of their inward life? It seems impossible to deny this. St. Paul, for instance, calls the Philippians "saints" (Phil. i. 1),

though some of them were "enemies of the cross, and whose end was destruction." (Phil. iii. 18, 19.) He no less addresses all the Hebrew Christians by the title of "holy brethren" (Heb. iii. 1), notwithstanding that some of them were spoken of as having lapsed, or being on the verge of lapsing into open apostacy. Indeed, the 10th chapter discusses the case of a man who *had* apostatized, and yet it speaks of him as having been in some sense "sanctified." "He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: of how much sorer punishment suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the *blood* of the *covenant wherewith he was sanctified*, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?" (Heb. x. 28, 29.) That this sanctification was the result of Baptism must be admitted by all who seriously consider the whole bearing of the passage. Thus, Greenhill, one of the most celebrated of the Puritan divines, says in his exposition of Ezekiel xvi. 9—"In the times of the Gospel those who live under the sound of it, and do profess the same, they are washed with the water of Baptism, but not all with the blood of Christ.

Simon Magus had the outward washing, but wanted the inward washing. So John baptized many with water, whom Christ never baptized with His blood: but all the Father gave Him and were covenanted for, those He washed with His blood. And whereas it is said (Heb. x. 29) that some which proved apostates were '*sanctified*' with that blood, you must understand it of those who, by profession of the faith, and '*participation of the seals, Baptism and the Supper of the Lord*,' were separated from Judaism and Paganism." To the same effect Bishop Hopkins, one of the most eloquent and evangelical prelates who occupied the episcopal bench about the time of the revolution of 1688, writes:—"In the New Testament we find sanctification and holiness ascribed to those who were never otherwise sanctified than by their external separation from the world, and profession of the doctrine of Christ. St. Paul directs his Epistle to the whole Church of Corinth as to "saints." Yet were there some in this Church that "had not the knowledge of God," that denied the resurrection and were grossly guilty of foul and flagitious crimes; as he himself witnesseth against them, and for which he sharply reproves them in that Epistle: saints they

are called, only because they were visible Church members, and made a profession of the Christian faith and name. Neither is it easy to be conceived that all those saints whose bowels Philemon refreshed, whose feet the widows or deaconesses washed, who had share of the collections and contributions of the Church, were such as were internally united unto Christ by a saving faith; or that when Saul persecuted the Church, and shut up the saints in prison, his rage and madness looked no farther how to find them out than merely by the profession of the name of Jesus. "Many of the saints did I shut up in prison:" and who they were is clear—"all that were of that way" (Acts ix. 2); that is who professed the name of Christ Jesus. Some are said to be redeemed, who yet certainly were never better than ecclesiastical saints; for, after, it is spoken of them, that they "denied the Lord who bought them." And some are said to be sanctified who yet are supposed to sin unpardonably (Heb. x. 29), accounting the blood of the covenant "wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing." These places do irrefragably prove that, in scripture language, those are called saints, and sanctified, who were members of

the Church of Christ, and thereby federally or relatively holy." [y]

Richard Sibbes, also a Puritan writer of the period, makes a similar statement in his commentary on 2 Cor. i. 1. "St. Paul wrote here to those that were *sacramental* saints, and such as by outward covenant and profession were saints; not that they were all of them inwardly so."

Without going further into this point, then, it may reasonably be allowed that Baptism, when received by adults on their solemn profession of genuine repentance and faith, was held to be the visible exhibition of their Saintship, and that in instances where this profession proved itself mistaken or insincere, the title of saints was not denied them altogether in the lower sense, even though it could not be claimed by them in the higher. In that case, however, their sanctification must have been all along outward, not inward; relative, not real; conditional, not absolute; alienable, not indefectible.[z] In other cases there was

[y] Bishop Hopkins on the Doctrine of the two Sacraments.

[z] "On the whole," says Augustine, "it is collected, that without visible sacraments, invisible sanctification has, to *some* persons, been present and profitable. . . . . But

not only the same kind of relative and external sanctification by which the persons baptized became separated from the rest of the world; but a confirmation of their inward sanctification also, through the gift of the Holy Ghost. Moreover their reception of Baptism must have constituted their true and formal entrance into full Saintship; because, by means of that sacrament alone, they were sealed in the covenant, and made full partakers of its holy privileges.

visible sanctification, which is conferred through visible sacraments, *may* be present, without the concomitancy of invisible sanctification."—*Augustine Quæst super Levit. Lib.* 3, 9, 84.

SECTION V.

ADOPTION.

Which is shown to be not only an assured relationship to God that is indefectible; but a title to privileges that are alienable.

ADOPTION, considered in its highest and most proper sense, belongs only to those who are truly justified by faith, and are inwardly sanctified by the Holy Ghost, who have access to the Throne of Grace with holy boldness, who are "pitied, protected, provided for, and chastened by God as a Father, and are never cast off, but are sealed to the day of redemption, and inherit the promises, as heirs of everlasting life."[a] The possessor of Adoption in this sense has an assured relationship to God so indivisibly connected with Christ that it is indefectible and eternal; he is "in Christ," like the living branch in the vine, which abides there continually because one with it, and inseparable from its root. Nevertheless, it is still a

[a] "Confession of Faith" of Scotland.

change in the believer's *state*, rather than in his *nature*, and therefore cannot be altogether dissociated from Baptism. For as under the nominal rule of Christianity there can be no salvation without both Faith and Baptism (Mark xvi. 16), so, by the same rule, there can be no entrance into the covenant condition of Adoption without both of them. It is not that Baptism has any inherent power to convey this saving grace of adoption; only that, having been appointed by Christ as the outward sign and seal of the covenant, it has the sole power now of giving authoritative effect to, and assurance of, this grace. Before its institution it was not so. For, during the ministry of Christ it was simply said—"As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God." (John i. 12.) But since then, the sacrament of Baptism having been appointed as generally necessary for salvation, its reception by the believing adult is no less required for Adoption. This can scarcely be denied by any reverent and simple-minded student of Scripture; and, indeed, would not be denied, had not some forms of Protestantism framed to themselves an entirely novel interpretation of the sacrament, unsanctioned by

our great reformers of religion in the 16th century. To prove this, no other authority than that of Calvin, need be asked. "Baptism," says he "is the initiatory sign by which we are admitted to the fellowship of the Church, that being ingrafted into Christ, *we may be accounted children of God.*"[b] Of course this opinion of Calvin is not urged as any settlement of the question. For that we must ever go to the "law and the testimony." But it is, at all events, valuable, as throwing light upon the opinion which the Church of Christ has always held on this subject, and which may be fairly regarded as a part of the witness of universal tradition.

The main question, however, which comes before us, is, whether this title of Adoption into the family of God be limited in Scripture to those who are savingly united with Christ; or whether it is used also in a lower and more general sense, to denote all who are brought into federal relationship with God by sacramental covenant.

That it was so under the Old Testament dispensation admits of no doubt. Moses said to the whole nation of Israel—"Ye are the children of

[b] Calvin's Institutes. Book iv., chap. xv., sec. 1.

the Lord your God" (Deut. xiv. 1, 2); although the nation included a large number of unrenewed people. They could only be called the "children of God," therefore, by way of covenant promise and designation, and in a manner totally irrespective of the use or abuse of their covenant privileges. In fact, at the time when they proved themselves most rebellious against God, or as we should now say, "unrenewed in heart," God most expressly acknowledge their Adoption. "I have nourished and brought up children; and they have rebelled against Me." (Isa. 1. 2.) Hence St. Paul, in enumerating the privileges of the Jews, says—"To whom pertaineth the adoption." (Rom. ix.)

But although this was true of the Jews, is it equally so of the Church of Christ? Does the same title of Adoption now follow from admission into covenant with God by Baptism, as formerly followed from admission into it by Circumcision?

To answer this question, it might be thought sufficient that we should take our stand on the consequences which inevitably follow from what has preceded. For if our view of Scripture Sanctification in a double sense be correct, there must be *a priori*, an exactly corresponding double sense

to Adoption; seeing that these two doctrines are constantly bracketed together in the New Testament. Thus in Eph. ii. 19, we have the Ephesian converts called "fellow citizens with the saints, and of the *household* of God;" this "household of God" being expressly synonymous with the *brethren* of Christ, according to Heb. iii. 6. Again in Heb. ii. 11, it is written—"For both He that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified are all of one, for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren;" where Adoption and Sanctification are spoken of as interchangeable. In the same way we have St. Paul writing to the Corinthians (2 Cor. vi. 17, 18),—"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My *sons* and *daughters*, saith the Lord Almighty;" where, if separation from heathenism and covenant consecration to God's service be Sanctification, certainly Adoption is tied up inseparably with it.

But leaving this form of proof, can any other independent arguments be brought forward?

One thing must be plainly premised, viz., that

the language of Scripture, however it may meet the case of nominal Christians and treat them as if adopted into the privileges and promises of true sonship, does not primarily address itself to that class. The Apostles everywhere wrote to the baptized Churches on a prior assumption that they were saints and children of God in the highest sense of those words. Knowing, however, that among those who were baptized into Christ, and admitted into the body of His Church, some held the blessings of saintship and sonship only in a secondary and subordinate sense, they often credited them with the title to these blessings, while at the same time they warned them of their forfeiture through unbelief. For example, the whole of the Judæo-Christian Church was addressed in the Epistle to the Hebrews by the title of "holy brethren," notwithstanding some of them were on the point of apostatizing from the faith. More than this; they were addressed also as "children of God." "Ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord." (Heb. xii. 5.) In which rebuke there is certainly a full recognition of their title to Adoption. Yet of some among

them this could only be an adoption into family *promises* and *privileges*, which were capable of being finally lost; otherwise how could it have been said in the same breath, "See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh. For if they escaped not, who refused Him that spake on earth, much more *shall not we escape, if we turn away from Him that speaketh from heaven.*" (Heb. xii. 25.) There is a similar use of the word in the Epistle to the Galatians, who were certainly not all "children of God" in the highest sense; for it was said of some of them "Christ is become of no effect unto you." (Gal. v. 4.) Nevertheless St. Paul speaks of them *all*, as having "received the adoption of sons." (Gal. iv. 5.) It is true that he here more immediately connects the term with character, rather than privilege; for he adds—"And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." (Gal. iv. 6.) Yet this in no way destroys the fact that the whole Galatian Church is referred to; inasmuch as the sending forth this Spirit into the heart is always a covenant promise of Baptism, although it be often hindered and lost by the want of a right reception of the sacrament.

As it seems to be of the utmost importance to get clear views upon the double sense of this word, let the truth of this position now be tested by connecting Adoption with two things which are invariably treated in Scripture as its concomitants, viz.—Faith and Inheritance; because unless it will bear to be put into this crucible, the opinion is worth nothing.

First. *Connect Faith with Adoption*, according to St. Paul in Galatians iii. 26: "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus."

If Adoption be here taken in its highest sense, Faith must be understood in its full renewing and transforming effect upon the heart, by means of which the believer, having entered into covenant with God at his baptism, becomes truly justified and saved. What, however, if Adoption be understood here as admission only into the *promises* and *privileges* of God's children? Is there then any warrant for a corresponding use of the word Faith? Do we ever find it used as conveying admission into a state of visible Church privileges? We adduce the case of Simon Magus as an example. It is written by the Holy Ghost in Acts viii.: "Then Simon himself also believed;"

and upon the profession of that faith he was baptized. Which faith (though only intellectual) admitted him into Church membership, and placed him in a state of promise and privilege among others, who held the same promises and privileges even in a higher sense. It gave him no adoption which carried with it an assured relationship to the eternal inheritance; but it did bestow adoption which carried with it a title to Gospel promises and privileges. And this text (Gal. iii. 26) proves it. "Ye are *all* the children of God, through faith in Christ Jesus." Had *all* the Galatians, then, a full justifying faith? On the contrary, many of the Galatians were trying to justify themselves by the works of the law, as the whole Epistle plainly shows. What faith, then, had those persons? An imperfect faith of the understanding and nothing more; a faith, perhaps, little better, in some cases, than that of Simon Magus. Yet they were "*all* the children of God through faith in Christ." It might not be that faith which renewed the heart, and so bestowed upon them the true likeness of God's children; but, at all events, it was a faith sufficiently sincere and genuine to admit them by Baptism into

visible membership with God's children, and give them a place among the promised privileges of the Gospel.

Secondly. *Connect Inheritance with Adoption.* Archbishop Leighton says—"Inheritance is convertible with sonship."[c] Of this there can be no doubt. Hence if the word inheritance has the double sense of *possession* and *privilege*, it follows that sonship or adoption must have it too. Now that it has the sense of *possession* is abundantly certain. St. Paul says—"Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance." (Coloss. iii. 24.) This sense of the word falls in, therefore, with that use of the word adoption found in Romans viii. 23—"Waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body;" where the adoption unto sonship is evidently considered as equivalent with an entrance into eternal glory. But is it equally clear that inheritance is ever used in the sense of heirship to *privileges?* Does the New Testament ever speak of the saints as liable to a loss of the inheritance? There cannot be the slightest question about the Old Testament doing this. Were not all the

[c] Commentary on 1 Peter i. 3, 4.

Israelites heirs to Canaan by covenant promise? "I have said unto you ye shall inherit the land." (Lev. xx. 24.) Yet this was only promised as an inheritance of privilege; for, as a matter of fact, the greater part of these inheritors of Canaan fell in the wilderness through unbelief. What, however, of the New Testament? Its language is exactly of the same kind. Thus St. Paul, in writing to the Hebrews, warns them of this very catastrophe, and applies it by way of example to them, saying—"Let us, therefore, fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of you should seem to come short of it" (Heb. iv. 1), or more properly, should "appear to have fallen short of it:" *i.e.*, "be found at last to have lost it." To the same effect he speaks in chapter x. 15—"Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God." Then, holding up Esau as an example, he adds—"For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected." He addresses also the Corinthians in the same solemn manner; reminding them that as the whole body of Israel was once baptized into Moses, and yet many of its members perished by murmuring and rebelling, so it was perfectly pos-

sible for them, after having been baptized into Christ, and placed in a corresponding state of covenant privilege, to fall by the same kind of unbelief. (1 Cor. x. 1—12. Compare also Jude v. 5.)

Under a review, then, of all these passages, it must be fully admitted, by every fair and candid inquirer, that as there is a higher and lower sense of the words Inheritance and Faith, so there is a corresponding higher and lower sense of the word Adoption; and that it is only by an intelligent understanding of this point, the language of Scripture can be thoroughly reconciled and harmonized.

To those who have been in the habit of exclusively regarding Adoption and Faith in their highest aspect, the foregoing remarks may appear to be a lowering of their proper signification. But are they scriptural or unscriptural? That is the question. It should never be forgotten that while, on the one hand, it is quite possible to fritter away the deep spirituality of Scripture terms until nothing is left in them but a miserable residuum of cold unmeaning formality, it is no less possible, on the other hand, by universally enforcing their highest spiritual meaning, to render a large portion of Scripture teaching practically inapplicable to

the mass of professing Christians. For instance, if every baptized person in the visible Church, not yet truly converted, is to be addressed as an open unbeliever, and treated as an actual heathen, without any relationship to God by Adoption, and the accompanying promise of inheritance in Christ Jesus; it follows that the Apostolic Epistles have nothing whatever to do with them, and that when they are being read in our churches, they have no more applicability to our general congregations than they have to Hindoos or Mahometans.

Nor is this line of exposition at all inconsistent with our older Nonconformist writers, who, in all points connected with sacramental questions, were very much nearer to catholic doctrine than their modern descendants.

Regard, for instance, the language of the Westminster Assembly's Shorter Catechism, explained by way of question and answer, and used in the Presbyterian Churches.

Q (4). What is meant by general Adoption?

A. It is the erecting of a certain indefinite number of mankind into a visible Church, and entitling them to all the *privileges* of it. (Romans ix. 4.)

Q (5). What is the outward seal, or badge, of this General Adoption?

A. It is Baptism; which comes in the room of circumcision under the Old Testament. (Ephesians iv. 5.)

As another example of the same kind let Thomas Boston be adduced; who scrupled not to write—"Divine Adoption is an act of God, whereby He does judicially take and constitute those that are by nature strangers to Him, and none of His family, members of His family and His own children, giving them the *privileges* of His children, or of His house *as* children. And it is twofold. 1st. External and federal; which is common to the members of the visible Church: which is a society gathered out from the rest of the world, the visible family of God upon earth, enjoying peculiar privileges beyond the rest of the world. This Adoption belonged to Israel of old. (Rom. ix. 4.) And God owned them as His sons in the midst of Egypt. (Exod. iv. 22, 23.) But now it is extended to us Gentiles. (Gal. iii. 26, 27.) This family has always, since Cain was cast out, been a separated family in the world, chosen out from among the rest; so they are called the sons of God. (Gen. vi. 2.) And

so it is still, and will be to the end. This Adoption, though it is really in itself a high dignity, so that, in comparison of them, the rest of the world are but as dogs to children (Matthew xv. 26), yet it is not a saving relation to God. And it may be lost, as the Jews rejected did theirs. Nay one may retain it; and yet his natural relation to the devil remain, as to his internal state, so he may be lost for ever notwithstanding of it. (John viii. 44.)" [d]

[d] Boston's Body of Divinity. Vol. ii., page 243.

SECTION VI.

ELECTION.

Which is shown to have reference to Life Eternal: both Absolutely, by way of Gift; and Relatively, by way of Privilege.

No one will expect any discussion here upon the subject of Election beyond the immediate purpose for which it is introduced. That it is a doctrine to be found in Scripture needs no demonstration; still less that it is propounded by our own Church. The only point to be decided is, whether, as the doctrines of Sanctification and Adoption may be viewed both primarily, in relation to all faithful believers, and secondly, in relation to the whole body of professing Christians, Election may be viewed also in the same manner.

That the Church of England does so is perfectly clear; for in her 17th Article she distinctly speaks of God's Predestination and Election of the Church to *eternal life.*

It will be here contended that the Apostles al-

ways held the Church of Christ before their view primarily, from the *divine* stand-point; uniformly addressing it as Elect to eternal life without qualification. Inasmuch, however, as these sacred writers were quite aware of the mixed character of the Church (some members of it only partaking of the promised *privileges* of the covenant, while others enjoyed its rich blessings in full *possession*), they no less used the words Elect, Chosen, Predestinate, etc., from a *human* stand-point; implying, under these terms, that every member of the baptized community may be called or designated to eternal life, but that it remained to be seen by the issue of their Christian walk, whether they really were invested with it. Thus St. Peter, although he addressed all those to whom he wrote, as Elect without any reserve or qualification, besought them to "make their calling and election sure;" knowing full well that some of them might only be Elect by ecclesiastical designation to eternal life, whereas the thing really wanted was a manifested and persevering life of holiness, which should prove them to have been Elect in the higher and more absolute sense of the word.

Viewed in this manner, Election must neces-

sarily carry with it in Scripture a double sense. On the *divine* side, it is eternal, sovereign, absolute, full of mercy to the whole world, and of glory to God Himself, yet in a manner unrevealed and above our finite reason; so that every speculation about its nature is vain, and the more men debate it the less they understand it. On the *human* side, it is visible only through an ecclesiastical order of divine government, by which the persons thus Elect are first gathered into the Church through repentance, faith, and baptism; then blessed with a life of holiness, and afterwards enabled to persevere in their holiness to the end. Speaking of adult converts, therefore, with whom the first part of this treatise it must be remembered has alone to do, Election, on its *human* side, can only be recognizable by a series of visible marks; the first of which is the admission of the convert into the Church by Baptism rightly received, and the last, his perseverance in a holy walk of faith to the end. Whether, within the number of those who thus profess at their first starting to be faithful believers, God sees, from the *divine* side of this doctrine, that some are only fruitless branches in the living vine, and will

never persevere to the end, is a question with which we have nothing to do. The duty of the Church is to assume in all charity, unless there be invincible evidence to the contrary, that its professing members are really Elect; and if not Elect in the higher sense of the term, that they are certainly so in a lower, seeing they have been called and baptized into an elect body which has been chosen out of mankind at large, and designated by way of privilege to the office of eternal life. We know, indeed, that within this body, thus federally Elect, many will be found at last who have not had the grace of perseverance to the end; some whose faith has only proved temporary, like those of whom our Lord speaks in the parable of the Sower, who "for a while believe, but in time of temptation fall away." (Matt. xiii. 8.)

It was exactly so with the ancient Jews. The whole nation was federally Elect in Abraham. Yet St. Paul speaks of a personal Election within this national Election, when in Rom. xi. 7, he writes,—"Israel as a nation hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the Election hath obtained it." In other words, there was a smaller, but higher Election, taken out of a larger and more

general one. In the same way, the various Churches of Christ were addressed by the Apostles as an Elect nation (1 Pet. ii. 9, 10), and yet nothing can be plainer than that they were all warned against falling from it: indeed some of them did so. (1 Tim. iv. 1. Heb. x. 26. 2 Pet. ii. 20. 1 John ii. 19.)

The views now propounded are not only Scriptural, but have been more or less held by the soundest evangelical writers. Thus Archbishop Leighton, when commenting on 1 Pet. i. 1, says, —"*To the Elect.* The Apostle here denominates *all* the Christians to whom he writes, by the condition of true believers, calling them elect and sanctified," etc. Again, a little further on he adds, "They that are in the visible Church and partake of external vocation are but like a large list of names as in civil elections is usual; out of which a small number is chosen to the dignity of true Christians, and invested into their privilege." *

Adams, too, in his Commentary on the Second Epistle of St. Peter, writes—"The determinate council of God doth not take away second means, but disposeth those passages into order. These two, Election and Vocation, are like Jacob's ladder,

* Leighton on 1 Peter i. 2.

whereupon the saints ascend like angels to God. Election is the top, Vocation is the foot."[f] In which passage it may be remarked that the title of Elect, when given in an ecclesiastical sense to all those who are called by Christ into His visible Church, exactly describes the *foot* of this ladder; for while we stand on earth, and cannot clearly see those whose destiny it is to reach the *top* of the ladder, all seem Elect alike, as far as outward privileges are concerned; and therefore we are at liberty to address them as Elect in respect to others not so called; leaving the issues of time alone to prove whether they are really and truly Elect in the higher sense of the word. Indeed Adams himself says as much, a little further on in his exposition; for he adds,—"By the law of charity we grant all those that *profess* Jesus Christ, to *be* Elect."[g]

Now it is exactly on this theory that the services of the Church of England are constructed. How does she define the Church? Like Scripture, she looks upon it primarily from the highest aspect; expressly calling it "a congregation of faithful men," and assuming that the whole body is Elect. Every service therefore assumes the par-

[f] Adams on 2 Peter i. 10. [g] Idem on 2 Peter i. 10.

ties concerned in it to be true children of God. Knowing, however, at the same time, that some may possibly be Elect and Adopted into *privileges* only, and not have real *possession* of these gifts in their highest and most saving sense, these services often speak, like Scripture, of the danger of our falling away from grace. Thus in the Burial Service,—"Suffer us not, at our last hour, for any pains of death, to fall from Thee." And before the Litany,—"Take not Thy Holy Spirit from us." These variations in the language of our Church formularies are not inconsistencies of speech. They are close imitations of the Word of God. For the Apostles called all their converts Elect, though they knew that some of them were only so in an inferior and subordinate sense; and moreover they cautioned the whole Church generally against the danger of high-minded presumption, and they warned them against falling from God. If this parallelism between the simple unaffected, unsystematized language of the New Testament, and the plain, manly language of our own Prayer-book were more studied, the Church of England would be better understood and more highly appreciated than she is by many of her mistaken half-hearted children.

SECTION VII.

THE COMMUNICATION OF SACRAMENTAL GRACE.

THERE is no necessity for shrinking from the use of this phrase, if only it be held in a proper sense. No doubt, as understood by the Church of Rome, and defined by the Council of Trent, it is highly objectionable. For under that view of the term, "If any one shall say that by the Sacraments of the New Law, *ex opere operato*, Grace is not conferred .... let him be accursed." In other words, there is Grace in the elements themselves, and power to communicate a divine blessing located in the outward symbols. When a certain theological school, therefore, in our own Church, desiring to approximate to everything Roman as far as possible, preaches the doctrine of Sacramental Grace in this spirit, there need be no surprise that those who wish to keep to the pure Reformation doctrines of the Church of England begin to feel alarmed.

Nevertheless, many Protestants, in their dread of one extreme, run into another; and depart, thereby, from primitive and catholic doctrine upon this subject.

In regard to the true believer there can be no difficulty. Even Calvin himself, when arguing against those who denied the Sacraments any power of manifesting Divine Grace to the faithful, said: "Both the Word of God and the Sacraments, therefore, confirm our faith, bringing under view the kind intentions of our heavenly Father, in the knowledge of which the whole assurance of our faith depends, and by which its strength is increased: and the Spirit also confirms our faith, when by engraving that assurance on our minds, He renders it effectual. Meanwhile, it is easy for the Father of lights, in like manner as He illumines the bodily eye by the rays of the sun, to illumine our minds by the Sacraments, as by a kind of intermediate brightness.[h]

In the same spirit, Archbishop Leighton, when writing on the words of St. Peter:—"The like figures whereunto even Baptism doth now save

[h] Calvin's Christian Institutes. Book iv., chap. xiv., sect. 10. Compare former quotation on the same subject, p. 18.

us," &c., says, "That Baptism hath a power is clear, in that it is so expressly said, it doth save us. What kind of power is equally clear from the way it is here expressed: not by a natural force of the element which, though adapted and Sacramentally used, can only wash away the filth of the body. Its physical efficacy reaches no further. But it is in the hand of the Spirit of God, as other Sacraments are, and as the Word itself is, to purify the conscience, and *convey grace* and salvation to the soul, by the reference it hath to, and union with, that which it represents."[1]

These are strong words, and would be deemed erroneous by many, if uttered in the present day. Yet they are no stronger than those which were commonly used by the great champions of truth and defenders of the faith in ancient times. Numberless passages might be adduced to show that the doctrine of Sacramental Grace, effectual to all true believers, was universally held by our best Reformers. Not, of course, that they held any grace inherently resident in the Sacraments themselves; but that it was conveyed through them, as

[1] Archbishop Leighton on 1 Peter iii. 20, 21.

through channels, to those who faithfully receive them.

Bishop Jewell says, for example,—"They are not bare signs. It were blasphemy to say so. The grace of God doth always work with His Sacraments. But we are taught not to seek that grace in the sign, but to assure ourselves, by receiving the sign, that it is given us by the things signified. We are not washed from our sins by the water; we are not fed to eternal life by the bread and wine, but by the precious blood of our Saviour Christ, that lieth hid in these Sacraments." And again,—"By the authorities of many ancient Fathers it is plain, that in the Sacrament of Baptism, by the sensible sign of water, the invisible grace of God is given unto us." To the same effect we find a passage in Nowell's Catechism, which was published under the authority of the Convocation of 1562. "The outward element hath neither of itself, nor in itself, inclosed the force and efficacy of the Sacrament, but that the same wholly floweth from the Spirit of God, as out of a spring-head, and is, by the Divine mysteries which are ordained by the Lord for this end, conveyed unto us." In the same way, Hooker remarks,—"As for the Sacraments

they really exhibit, but for aught that we can gather out of that which is written of them, they are not really, nor do really contain in themselves, that grace which with them, or by them, it pleases God to bestow."

But why should this Doctrine of Grace, communicated to Adults, through a faithful participation of Baptism, be made to rest on the words of men, when the voice of God Himself says the same thing still more plainly: "Repent and be baptized every one of you for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost"? (Acts ii. 38.) If this text does not teach that a right reception of the outward sign carries along with it an impartation or confirmation of the thing inwardly signified, either words must be powerless to represent ideas, or the language of Scripture, like that of diplomacy, must be intended to conceal thought, instead of expressing it. It is not that adult converts who have been spiritually renewed unto repentance and faith must wait for their Baptism in order to receive their first supplies of grace; for how could they repent or believe at all without the grace of God preventing them? What we contend for here is, that such persons

can have no *realized covenant Grace* until after Baptism, — no assured and confirmed promise of Grace by which they can plead God's covenant, as their own, for the strengthening of their faith, and the supply of their daily wants. In other words, they have in Baptism—

(1.) *The Covenant Grace of Acceptance;* because they hereby enter into formal reconciliation with God, becoming guaranteed partakers of the death of Christ, "for the remission of sins." Their whole state, or standing before God, is changed. They have access by faith into that grace, wherein they "stand" (Rom. v. 2); and for which, without Baptism, they would have had neither any certified evidence nor authority. (Acts ii. 38.)

(2.) *The Covenant Grace of Privilege*; for they hereby inherit that covenant promise of the Holy Ghost, under the influence of whose in-dwelling in their hearts they are enabled to grow more into the image of Christ, and to persevere steadfastly to the end.

But what shall be said to the case of an Adult who has been baptized into the Church on a nominal repentance and faith? Can we speak in any manner of Sacramental Grace concerning such

a person. Certainly not in the way just described; for he would have no Grace of Acceptance as a pardoned sinner, and no Grace of Privilege and Assistance as one who thereby received the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. "Such persons," says Jerome, "receive the water, but do *not* receive the Spirit." (In Ezek. xvi. 4, 5.) "To the sealed fountain, even the gift of the Holy Ghost, no man approaches in Baptism unless he be *morally changed*," adds Augustine. (Opera. Vol. vii., p. 156.) Nevertheless, in the case just supposed, the baptized person would enter into a state of Acceptance and of Privilege, provisionally and conditionally; because, though man fail on his side of the covenant, God is always ready to hold to His own side of it, the moment that such an one has been led to repent and believe in Christ with his whole heart. In other words, the man would not be without a certain kind of grace under the Sacrament of Baptism; albeit the grace would be of a provisional and defectible nature. If notwithstanding his Baptism, he continued in sin, he would violate the conditions of grace under which he had put himself, "do despite to the Spirit of Grace," and tread under-foot the "blood of the

everlasting covenant," wherewith he had been "sanctified,"—in a word, he would be "receiving the grace of God in vain." (2 Cor. vi. 1.)

It will be seen that the word Grace is used here, not from its divine point of view, but its human; that is to say, as the expression of that love and goodwill of God toward sinners, by which He pleads through the Gospel and His Holy Spirit, with the minds and consciences even of those who finally remain impenitent. Such persons enjoy the means of grace, which are fully, freely, and sincerely set before them by God; yet they do *not receive* the Spirit; they rather do despite to the Spirit *working in those means;* and so they "receive the grace of God in vain."[j] (2 Cor. vi. 1.)

This work of God's Spirit is very pointedly set forth in a passage already partially quoted, and which will now be given in full. It is taken from the writings of Dr. Goodwin, where he is describing the effect of Baptism as uniting the soul to Christ and conveying the influences of the Spirit of God in a certain sense, although short of saving grace. Some there are, he says, in whom "Christ

[j] See Preliminary Remarks.

begins to shoot some sap of His Spirit into their hearts, quickening them with many good motions, and stirring up some juiciness of affection in the administration of the Word and Sacraments, which causes them to bud forth into good inward purposes and outward good beginnings; but this being not the communication of the Spirit, as sanctifying and changing the branch into the same nature with the root, therefore it comes to pass, they are still nipped in the bud as the stony ground was, and the sap stricken in again; like rath ripe fruit, which looketh forth upon a February rain, are nipped again with an April frost. Many, when young, and their affections are green and tender, are wrought upon, and bud; but the scoffs of men nip them, and their lusts draw the sap another way, as hopes of preferment, and the pleasures of sin; and these buds wither, and fall off, and the Spirit withdraws himself wholly in the root again.

"Some there are, as the thorny ground, in whom this inward sap communicated to them, though not spiritually changing and renewing them, yet being communicated in a further degree, abides in them longer, shoots up further; and these prove

exceeding green branches, and are owned for true, even by the people of God themselves, as Judas was by the Apostles, and therefore are outwardly like unto them; for how else are they said to be 'cast out'? (v. 16), who therefore had once some fruit to commend them, for which they were accounted by the people of God and received amongst them, who 'judge of trees by the fruit.' Neither are their fruits merely outward, like Solomon's apples of gold in pictures of silver, merely painted; but they have a sap that puts a greenness into what they do, and by reason of which they bear and bring forth; for how else do they wither? (v. 6) which is a decay of inward moisture, and outward greenness. And these also have some kind of union with Christ as with a Lord (2 Pet. ii. 1), He ascending to bestow gifts, even upon the rebellious also,"[k] etc.

Among these persons, however, who are baptized at the time ineffectually, because they are without any true repentance and faith, there may be the greatest possible difference. With some it may be only a presumptuous and arrogant profession; with others, it may be insincere and hypo-

[k] See the place where this passage was quoted before, p. 65.

critical; with others, like those just described by Dr. Goodwin, sincere, but ephemeral; with others, anxious, earnest, and ultimately spiritual, though at the time of baptism tinged by self-righteousness. Now, between the first or second of these cases and the last, there is evidently a very great distinction. In the last, there is a state of mind on the part of the professing convert, which corresponds to that described by our Lord in John vii. 17, when He said,—"If any man do My will, he shall know the doctrine whether it be of God;" that is to say,—his anxious earnestness, enlightened up to a certain point, yet blinded by unbelief and self-righteousness, if it go on in the path of duty seeking God's blessing, and doing His will as far as it is understood, shall hereafter be more fully instructed by divine grace, until all becomes clear and plain. Under such circumstances, the Baptism of this Adult will carry along with it a certain amount of grace or favour from the Lord Jesus Christ by means of which he will be led on into *true* repentance and faith, and so inherit all the abiding promises of the sacramental covenant, viz., "remission of sins, and the gift of the Holy Ghost."

It must again, however, be remarked that in

thus connecting Adult Baptism with the grace of Forgiveness, it is not implied that there can be no Forgiveness before it, but only this,—that there can be no *assured covenant* Forgiveness. The doctrine of Baptismal Grace to the true believer stands, therefore, in immediate connection with the doctrine of Assurance, and is full of the richest consolation. It represents the seal of heaven let down visibly on our Faith, as a means by which we may become assured that our justification is a living reality, and that our sins are actually forgiven. It tells us that henceforth we need doubt no more of acceptance, because the seal of God's promise is upon us; that the condemnation of the past has gone (Rom. viii. 1); and that now we need only a daily cleansing from the sins that daily remain to us. (John xiii. 10.) This is just the way in which the Apostles addressed their epistles to the Churches. Writing on the principle laid down so fundamentally by St. Peter,—"Repent and be baptized for the remission of sins," and which has been stereotyped so tersely in the Nicene Creed, "I believe in one Baptism for the remission of sins,"—they uniformly assumed that all their readers were already in a cleansed and forgiven state.

Thus, in 1 Cor. vi. 11,—"Such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified." Also in Eph. iii. 32,—"Be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." So in 1 John ii. 12,—"I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you." So in Ephesians once more, chap. v. 26,—"Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word;"—*i. e.*, "with the bath of water by the word" (τῷ λουτρῷ του ὕδατος.),—a passage which even Calvin refers to Baptism,[1] although with singular inconsistency he refuses to allow the same of John iii. 5.

This doctrine of the assurance of pardon through Adult Baptism as the seal of Faith, is so very plain, and contains so evidently the nature of Grace conferred, that we can only wonder how any one who simply believes in the Word of God should doubt it; still more how any one who professes to honour the opinion of the great Protestant Reformers should do so. It was on this point, among

[1] Calvin's Institutes. Book iv., chap. xvi, § 22; also chap. xv., § 2.

others, that Calvin opposed the Anabaptists, inveighing with no small force on their reduction of the sacrament to a mere empty badge or mark of profession, and openly avowing, that "Baptism is a kind of sealed instrument by which God assures us that all our sins are so washed, covered, and effaced, that they will never come into His sight, never be mentioned, never be imputed;" adding, "It is His will that all who have believed be baptized *for the remission of sins.*"[m]

In the same way Baptism implies a reception of grace through the "Gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts ii. 38); for the *promise* of this descends from the first Pentecostal converts, to "all that are afar off, and to as many as the Lord our God shall call" (v. 39.) We have, therefore, a sealed assurance of the indwelling of the Spirit in our hearts, as a means by which all true believers may enjoy abiding fellowship with God, be sustained in mystical union with the Lord Jesus Christ, and receive out of His fulness all needful supplies of grace for final perseverance. It is not to be contended that these things are absolutely impossible to be had

[m] Calvin's Institutes, Book iv., chap. xv. See former remarks on this subject, pp. 17, 18, 19.

apart from Baptism, for no man can prove such a negative. The doctrine of Scripture is, that although they are absolutely appointed for believers, by free and unmerited promise, they are nevertheless only sealed and made over to them instrumentally through the institution of Baptism. It has pleased God to have it so. Why, then, should we dislike it, and endeavour to separate the sign from the thing signified? The founders of our own beloved Church did not so. Archbishop Sandys says, "The Sacraments are pledges and assurances of remission of sins and salvation, purchased by the death of Christ.[n] Hutchinson, in his treatise on "The Image of God," when showing the reason why the Holy Spirit appeared at the Baptism of Christ in the likeness of a dove, says,—"One cause is, that we should believe the Holy Ghost to be a Worker in Baptism, to wash us, to purify us, to regenerate us, to make us God's children, and heirs of salvation." Even old Latimer is not a whit behind the rest of them:—"Now like as Christ was born in rags, so the converting of the whole world is by rags, by things which are most vile in this world. For to go to the matter,—What is so

[n] Archbp. Sandy's Sermons, p. 87. (Parker Soc. Ed.)

common as water? Every foul ditch is full of it; yet we wash our remission of sins by Baptism: for like as He was found in rags, so must we find Him by Baptism. Then we begin: we are washed with water; and then the words are added: for we are baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, whereby the Baptized receiveth His strength. Now this sacrament of Baptism is a thing of great weight; for it *ascertaineth* and *assureth* to us, that like as the water washeth the body and cleaneth it, so the blood of Christ our Saviour cleanseth and washeth it from all filth and unclean sins."[o]

Many more testimonies might easily be supplemented. Let these suffice. Only let it be added, in conclusion, that while our Reformers always adopted this sort of language, they never failed on suitable occasions to disabuse the popular mind of a vain confidence in the *opus operatum* of the sacrament. Thus Jewell, in controversy with Harding, says,—"Verily to ascribe felicity or Remission of sin, which is the inward work of the Holy Ghost, into any manner of outward action whatsoever, it

[o] Sermon on St. John Evangelist's Day.

is a superstitious, a gross, a Jewish error."[p] In the same way St. Augustine,—"Christ saith not, Ye are clean for the Baptism's sake wherewith ye are washed; but for the word's sake that I have spoken unto you."[q] Alas, how difficult it is to steer clear of extremes, and to speak on this vexed subject with that moderation and calmness which its solemnity and dignity demand!

[p] Article xx., p. 757. (Parker Soc. Ed.)

[q] St. Augustine on John. Tract 80.

PART II.

The Right Reception of Baptism by Infants.

"INFANTS certainly cannot believe with the heart to righteousness, or confess with the mouth to salvation as the thief could; nay, by their crying and noise while the sacrament is administering they disturb the holy mysteries; and yet no Christian man will say they are baptized to no purpose."

"Infant Baptism has not been instituted by councils, but was ever in use."

ST. AUGUSTINE.

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT.

EVERYTHING advanced throughout the foregoing pages has been in strict relation to Adult Baptism; of which the Baptism administered to the Pentecostal converts may be regarded as a fair normal type.

The course to be pursued in prosecuting the next branch of the enquiry will be,—*first*, to put ourselves, as far as possible, in the exact position of these Pentecostal converts; all of whom, being Jews, were in the constant habit of regarding their children as in covenant with God, and would therefore naturally wish to know in what way those children would be affected by the terms of the New Covenant of Christianity. In connection with which thought stands the peculiar appropriateness and significancy of St. Peter's words,—"Repent and be baptized every one of you, for

the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost; for the promise is unto you and to your *children*, and to all that are afar off, and to as many as the Lord our God shall call." (Acts ii. 38, 39.)

Our *second* object will be to trace out the general language of the New Testament, as used both by Christ and His Apostles, with a view to see what place Infants have assigned them in the Church of God; and to show how thoroughly they are assumed as having a right and title to Christian Baptism. The *third* object will be to examine some of the erroneous reasonings with which the doctrine of Infant Baptism is often assailed by its opponents. And *lastly*, we shall very briefly enter into some of the evidences which exist in favour of the actual practice of Infant Baptism during the primitive period of ecclesiastical history.

Before doing this, however, it may be well, at the present stage of our inquiry, to indicate the general ground on which it is proposed to exhibit the right of infants to Baptism.

Let it be at once understood, then, that we shall primarily, although not solely, rest the Baptism of Infants upon the covenant acceptance of their

parents. We shall adduce it, in fact, as a necessary corollary from the Adult Baptism of believers; showing that God's willingness to enter into covenant with their Infant seed, was organically included in His willingness to enter into covenant with themselves; Infant Baptism, properly speaking, being only based on the representative faith of those who bring them, to share in a covenant which has been already, through grace, made their own.

The question as to whether true faith is or is not properly represented in those who thus present their children for Baptism, cannot be legitimately considered in this argument; for it must always be held that where persons who are already baptized profess themselves publicly in the church to be sincere believers, and there is no well-known reason for considering them reprobates, there the covenant blessings of Christianity must be frankly conceded to them. Were we to sit in judgment, as ministers of God, upon doubtful cases of this kind, we might possibly decide both uncharitably and untruly, and exclude some from their privileges whom God would admit. We can only adopt, therefore, the rule which the Apostles themselves

seem to have adopted; demanding, in the first place solemn profession of true faith, and afterwards when it is made, receiving and acting upon it in the fulness of Christian charity.

Though the ground, however, upon which the actual right of Infants to Baptism rests, is primarily the faith of their own parents, yet it does not necessarily follow that Infants presented for Baptism under other circumstances are necessarily disqualified from receiving this sacrament. St. Augustine, for instance, says in one place,—"It cometh sometime to pass that the children of bond slaves are brought by their lord; sometime, the parents being dead, the friends alive undertake that office; sometime strangers, or virgins consecrated unto God which neither have, nor can have, children of their own, take up infants in the open streets, and so offer them unto Baptism, whom the cruelty of unnatural parents casteth out, and leaveth to the adventure of uncertain pity."[a] Upon which passage Hooker remarks,—"As, therefore, he which did the part of a neighbour to that wounded man whom the parable of the Gospel describeth; so they are *fathers*, although strangers, that bring

[a] Aug. Ep. xxiii., al. 98., § 6.

Infants to Him which maketh them the sons of God."[b] Under circumstances of this kind, it would be both unreasonable and uncharitable to suppose that God refused to Infants the right of being baptized into the covenant blessings of Christianity. Beside which, the Church of God herself, who, to use the words of Hooker once more, is the "mother of believers," may surely be taken in all cases of this kind, as standing in the place of the faithful parent. "Be it then, that Baptism belongeth to none but such as either believe, or else, being Infants, are the children of believing parents,—in case the Church do bring children to the holy font whose natural parents are either unknown, or known to be such as the Church accurseth but yet forgetteth not in that holy severity to take compassion upon their offspring (for it is the Church which doth offer them to Baptism by the ministry of presenters), were it not against both equity and duty to refuse the *mother of believers* herself, and not to take her in this case for a *faithful parent?*"[c]

It is in this view that the office of Sponsorship

[b] Hooker's Eccl. Pol., Book v., 64.

[c] Eccles. Pol., Book v., 64.

has, from the earliest ages, been instituted,—not to supplant the faith and pious education of believing parents,—but to furnish the Church with a double security for the presence of faith in her presentation of children at Baptism. Sponsors, indeed, may be considered, in this respect, as having been appointed by the Church to be the visible representatives of her own faithfulness in conserving the only general principle[d] upon which Infant Baptism can effectually rest,—namely, faith in the presenting parties,—and this is the reason why she expects all her Sponsors to be communicants. The miserable fact, that this theory of Sponsorship is overlooked and violated by our want of proper Church discipline, affords no reason why we should refuse to call attention to it. On the contrary, it furnishes us with ten thousand good reasons for doing so. Moreover, it speaks trumpet-tongued to the whole body of the Church of England, calling upon clergy and laity alike, to shake off their sleep of past indifference, and rouse themselves to repentance and reformation.

[d] We say *general* principle; because Sponsors are necessarily dispensed with in the case sickness, where it is supposed that no time can be found to procure them.

CHAPTER I.

THE LANGUAGE OF ST. PETER TO THE PENTECOSTAL CONVERTS.

THIS is separated from the rest of the Scripture argument, because it lies so evidently on the front of it; not that it is really one whit plainer or more important than what will follow, but that it opens the subject just where the opponents of Infant Baptism wish it to be opened—namely, with a demand for Repentance as the great preliminary condition of Baptism. It was no wonder that this condition should have been demanded of the Pentecostal multitude. They must all have perceived its reasonableness; and being "pricked in their hearts" with a sense of past sin and unbelief, they were no doubt perfectly willing to accept it. But although thus willing to enter themselves into the new covenant, humbly receiving Baptism on the level of Gentile proselytes—a condition which

had so strangely staggered Nicodemus—yet they might reasonably have hesitated about it, on account of their ignorance of the terms upon which their children were to be admitted. "Might *they* come in at the same time?" Judging from the custom in regard to Baptism on the reception of heathen proselytes into the Jewish commonwealth, they must necessarily have anticipated an answer to this question in the affirmative. Lightfoot says —"Since the Baptism of children was familiarly practised in the admission of proselytes, there was no need that it should be confirmed by express precept when Baptism came to be an evangelical sacrament. For Christ took Baptism as He found it; and the whole nation knew perfectly well that little children had always been baptized. If, therefore, He had intended that the custom should be abolished, He would have expressly prohibited it." Still, it is only reasonable to suppose that the doubt was more or less in the minds of this heart-stricken multitude. Nothing was more natural than that they should have said to one another—"We are now invited into the kingdom of Christ through Baptism, and we can only be baptized upon our Repentance. What, then, is to become

of our little ones? They are too young to repent as we do. Are they, therefore, to be excluded from the kingdom of Christ till they are old enough to repent like ourselves? Are our households to be divided in religious privileges? Are our children to lose their covenant birthright? Hitherto they have had a standing place in the Church. Will this change of initiatory sacrament rob them of the blessing?" The Apostle anticipated these doubts by saying, in the plainest manner possible, —"The promise is unto you, and to your CHILDREN." In other words,—"Your children shall still have, as they have had, an interest in the covenant, and a title to the external seal of it. Come over to Christ, to receive those inestimable benefits; for the promise of remission of sins, and of the gift of the Holy Ghost, is to you and to your children."* It is always objected here that the word children (τέκνα) simply means posterity, as it does in Acts xiii. 33; and that the introduction into the passage of any idea which has special reference to infants is a gratuitous assumption.

In reply to this, it may be remarked that even granting τέκνα in this verse to mean posterity, it

* Mt. Henry, *in loco.*

cannot possibly do so to the *exclusion* of Infants. On the contrary, starting out with a concession to our opponents that St. Peter may possibly have used this word in its larger and more general sense of posterity, we shall show by a very simple line of reasoning that he must, notwithstanding, necessarily have conveyed to their minds the full right and title of their Infant children to become partakers of Baptism. For when under the Old Testament dispensation, God gave Israel the promises of a "better covenant" through the Messiah, it was invariably accompanied by the declaration that it should belong to their posterity to "all generations." Nothing was a more solid element of Jewish faith than that this Messianic covenant should extend to their "seed, and seed's seed even for ever." (Isa. lix. 21.) Viewed, therefore, in relation to their own Jewish standing-point (which was unmistakeably and beyond all possible contradiction the standing-point of Infant Covenantship with God, not only for *themselves* but for all their *posterity* also), the language of St. Peter must have been necessarily associated with the same ideas. Here he was, as a Jew, propounding to Jews the New Covenant which had been long ago

promised to their fathers. He first implored them to receive it, and accept their entrance into it through Baptism. He then went on to confirm the testimony of their Prophets; assuring them that this covenant of Baptism should be transmitted to their *posterity*. Nevertheless he gave them no notice of any intention on God's part to revoke the very principle upon which He had been all along dealing with them in regard to that posterity, viz., that it should enter into the Covenant during Infancy. On the contrary, his words led them on in that very direction; for he said—"The promise is to you and to your *children*." Let it be put, then, to the plain straightforward common sense of any unprejudiced reader, whether these Jewish converts, in the absence of any notice to the contrary, might not justly have gone back to their homes, and said: "God has not changed His purposes. The sign of His covenant is altered, and the conditions upon which we, as parents, enter into it are altered; being no longer a matter of nationality, but of our personal repentance and faith: yet if we ourselves repent, and embrace the Gospel, the New Covenant will still be a covenant for our children, and our

children's children after us." At any rate, if this notion had been wrong, if the Lord *had* changed His purposes, and was really meaning to revoke the past, and refuse their Infant children a place in His kingdom, would not the language of St. Peter have sadly misled them? Would not this have been just the time for some distinct revelation of a change in the purposes of God, and for some explicit interdict of His covenant with children? Yet not only had they no such interdict; but the language employed was exactly calculated to lead them in an opposite direction, and to confirm them in their general interpretation of God's covenant with their posterity.[f]

[f] This line of reasoning might be strengthened by a very simple illustration. We have for the most part among us a recognised system of medical practice; one feature of which is the custom of Vaccination, not necessarily to the exclusion of Adults, but certainly obligatory upon Infants. Now suppose some remarkable student of medicine should arise, gathering disciples after him, training them, and sending them forth as practitioners according to his own peculiar principles. And suppose he should demand as a condition from all those who wished to receive the benefits of this new system of medicine, that, before they could be allowed to do so, they must first submit to be vaccinated by his disciples; not introducing, it will be observed, a new and hitherto unknown custom, but simply adopting an old and familiar practice, and arbitra-

rily constituting that as a test of their faith in himself, and of their promised obedience to his rules and regulations. What would be the natural, nay, inevitable consequence? Would not all Adult parents who desired to put themselves under this new system of medical treatment immediately present their children for vaccination as well as themselves? Is it to be supposed that it would ever occur to them to argue, that, because the author of this new system had not made especial mention of Infants when imposing Vaccination as a grand preliminary to his system, it was therefore not intended to be applied to them! Would they not rather understand this order for Vaccination according to its usual method of administration; and seeing that Infants were not specifically excluded from it, assume as a matter of course that it was equally meant for them as for Adults? But suppose, further, that when recommending this new medical practice to the public, and explaining the terms upon which its promised benefits were to be imparted, these disciples of the system were to say,—"Change your old opinions, and believe in our new principles; and as a proof thereof receive Vaccination, and then you shall enter into all the ulterior benefits resulting from obedience to our rules;" adding these remarkable words, —"For the promise is to you and to your *children.*" Surely it would be, in the highest degree, inconceivable to imagine that under such circumstances, those who were disposed to become converts to the new system, would refer the word "children" to their posterity; and not interpret it of Infants, who, according to all the rules of general medical practice, had been ever in the habit of receiving Vaccination. This conclusion seems inevitable, if we are but true to natural sequences of thought. For the connection between Vaccination and Infants being so thoroughly inwrought into the character of the operation itself by long familiar custom, the very choice of this initiatory rite as a symbol of adhesion to the new medical system which we are supposing, would of itself imply the same connection; and nothing but the most imperative and

absolute denial of its application to Infants, could possibly justify us in excluding them from coming under the word "children," in this especial case of promise.

We submit that what we have here argued in the case of Vaccination, is identical with that of Baptism. Antecedent practice rules the interpretation; and where words of promise are used in strict keeping with that antecedent practice, any other interpretation of the words becomes unnatural and illegitimate.

CHAPTER II.

A REVIEW OF THE GENERAL LANGUAGE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT IN REGARD TO CHILDREN.

SECTION I.

THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS.

It would have been very strange if our Redeemer had so constituted His New Testament Church as to exclude little children from any place of visible membership in it. And yet He really has done this, if the Baptist theory be correct. With all reverence let it be said (and yet it may be stated with the greatest emphasis), that had He so excluded them, it would have been singularly inconsistent with His own treatment of them, when He took them up in His arms and exclaimed—"Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God." (Mark

x. 14.) This expression, "the kingdom of God," was used by our Lord to express one of three things: either the Jewish Church then existing, —or the Gospel Church which He was about to establish,—or the future Church in the day of His coming glory. He generally employed it to denote the second of these. Take, as examples, Matt. xii. 28, Mark i. 14, 15, Mark ix. 1, Mark xii. 34, Luke iv. 43, Luke ix. 2, Luke xxi. 31. He only employed it occasionally to mark the third. (See Luke xix. 11.) And perhaps, still more occasionally to express the first. But, that He did employ it of the Jewish Church, is clear from His remark to the Jews in Matt. xxi. 43,—"The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." This uniform application of the same phrase, therefore, to denote the Church under all its various forms of dispensation, plainly shows that however the Church altered in its various phases of life, it still remained one and the same kingdom of God throughout. When, therefore, our blessed Lord said, respecting little children,—"Of such is the kingdom of God," He expressed a sentiment which had no exclusive reference to the Jewish Church, but was fundamentally true of the

Church in all ages; and proved to us, in words as plain as could have been used, that the doctrine of Infant Church Membership was an organic law of God's kingdom, which no change of dispensation could ever abrogate or even alter.

No man in his senses could urge any more distinct argument in favour of Infant Baptism from the above passage than this. Specifically, it says nothing whatsoever about Baptism. What it does say however, is quite sufficient; inasmuch as it lays down a general and fundamental principle, from which both the propriety and validity of Infant Baptism follow as an inevitable consequence. For it cannot be doubted that these Jewish children in question belonged to the kingdom of God by visible covenant membership; and in this plain practical sense, the disciples must have received the saying of their Lord. When they embodied it, therefore, in the record of His Gospel teaching, and stereotyped it, without note or comment, as a principle which was to guide the New Testament Church afterwards, what other inference is left us but to receive it as it was first understood?

It may not be at all impossible indeed, to suppose that our blessed Lord alluded, in some measure, to

the typical character of little children in relation to the humility and simplicity of true believers, as the Baptists contend; but that does not in the slightest degree touch our present argument. As a matter of fact, He was rebuking His disciples for attempting to refuse Him the rich privilege of blessing infants, while under an organic law of the Church they were acknowledged members of His kingdom. And we argue that it is unreasonable in the highest degree to suppose He would have used language so unqualified, if He had ever intended under the New Testament form of the kingdom of God to change that organic law, and exclude little children from visible membership with His covenant. Such a supposition does as much violence to the laws of logical sequence, as it does to the universal traditions of Christendom. Hence we argue with Richard Baxter,—"Doth Christ take children into His arms, and would He not have them all put into the visible Church? Would He have us receive them in His Name, and yet not receive them into His Church? I would rather answer Him upon His own encouragement, for admitting a hundred infants *into* His Church, than answer for keeping one *out* of it."

The argument upon this subject, however, like that on every other which is most important, does not rest upon one or two inductions, but many; it is cumulative rather than specific, receiving its strength chiefly from the manner in which it underlies all that is written about children in the Word of God. As far as we have seen at present, our Lord (to say the least of it) gave His apostles no notice of His intention to repeal the Infant Covenant. Indeed, so far from this, He led St. Peter most emphatically to re-ordain it; saying, in direct connection with Baptism,—"The promise is to you and to your *children*." And He himself confirmed it by declaring little children to belong to the kingdom of heaven.

SECTION II.

THE TESTIMONY OF THE APOSTLES.

In examining this part of the subject, four questions must be entered into:—

(a) *The way in which the Apostles spoke of Children to their Christian parents.*

St. Paul distinctly told the Ephesians to bring up their children in the "nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Ephes. vi. 4); using language which at first sight, to say the least of it, appears to imply, that these children held some specific standing in the covenant of grace, upon the basis of which they were to be instructed and disciplined for Christ. Without pressing this, however, another passage may be pointed to,—1 Cor. vii. 13, 14; where the relationship of Christian children to the covenant is far more clearly expressed. The Apostle had just been saying that, in the case of a mixed marriage where the wife only was a Christian, if the husband were still willing to live with her she was on no account to leave him. He then goes on

to give the reason,—"For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband." We can scarcely understand the word "sanctified" in this place, further than of an external or relative sanctification; in which sense it has been already explained. The fair meaning of the passage, therefore, is, that although a heathen married couple were in themselves ecclesiastically unsanctified and unclean, yet the circumstance of one of them afterwards becoming a convert to Christ completely altered their ecclesiastical position; the faith of the converted partner so relatively sanctifying the condition of the other as to make their marriage holy, and cause it to be fairly admissible among Christian marriages in general. The Apostle then goes on to confirm this view, by showing how fundamentally necessary it was to the validity of their children's recognition in the Church; for he adds, "Else were your *children* unclean, but now are they *holy* (literally '*saints*' ἅγιά)." As though he had said, "If, in the case of one of these mixed marriages, a Christian husband deserts his heathen wife on the ground that his state of matrimony is unclean, and not justly recognizable before the Church, because con-

tracted under a past state of heathenism; see how this acts upon the ecclesiastical condition of such a man's children. For if his marriage be so unclean that it can have no valid standing, no place of legal recognition in the Christian Church, then his children by such a marriage must be void of all recognition within the Church also. If, notwithstanding his true conversion to the faith of Christ, his marriage still be reckoned as a heathen one, then his children must be reckoned as heathen children, essentially beyond the pale of 'saintship.' But this is not so; for they are visibly recognized in saintship, being τέκνα ἅγιά, and are privileged to be reckoned within the Church."

It is perfectly true that this passage makes no express mention of Baptism. Its whole bearing, however, evidently presupposes and justifies the practice of it. For if Christian children are not to be reckoned "unclean" in the Church, what forbids their admission to the Christian covenant? If the faith of a believing parent be sufficiently vicarious to constitute the child "a saint" (which St. Paul here affirms), why should not the same faith enable that child to receive Baptism as the seal of its saintship? Surely the one may neces-

sarily follow as the correlative or consequent of the other.

In reply to all this, it may be urged that, upon the same principle, the unbelieving husband might equally claim a right to Baptism; inasmuch as he also is said to be "sanctified," or made holy by his wife. The answer however, is obvious. For, to be consistent with the proper use of these relative terms, "holy," "clean," "sanctified," we can only suppose them to convey the right of admission to ecclesiastical privileges, so far as the condition of the person concerning whom they are predicated admits, but not beyond. The unbelieving husband, for instance, was so far "sanctified," as to be admissible to all the ecclesiastical privileges of matrimony; but not to any others, because hindered through his heathenism. His children, in the same way, were so far sanctified as to be admissible to all the ecclesiastical privileges of Christian birth; but not to any others, because hindered by reason of age. Yet to what ecclesiastical privilege *could* they be admitted, as infants, save Baptism? If you deny them this, and affirm that although they were "holy" and "sanctified," they were yet unfit to be introduced, like the holy seed among the Jews, into

early covenant with God, you destroy the idea of their eligibility to Church privileges altogether, you take from them all place of recognition in the visible Church, and completely destroy the Apostle's argument.

We claim, then, a right to infer from this passage, the existence of a representative, or imputative faith in Christian parents; on the basis of which, by the covenant of God's overflowing grace, their offspring are looked upon, for their parents' sake, as having a title to membership with the Church. In other words, the saintship of the believing parent carries along with it the germ of its own privileges in the person of his offspring: not securing salvation for his offspring, but obtaining for them a right to visible membership with the Church of Christ, and therein a claim to recognized saintship. This will be abundantly confirmed by what follows:—

(b) *The way in which the Apostles addressed themselves personally to the Children of Christian converts.*

This view of the question is highly important. For whatever is meant by the term "saints," these children are certainly addressed among the number.

Two Epistles of St. Paul prove it. In writing to the Colossians, he dedicates his letter to the "saints and faithful brethren in Christ, which are at Colosse" (ch. i. 2); and yet in the course of his exhortations to these "saints," after having addressed himself to wives, and husbands, he passes on to children, saying—"Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing unto the Lord." (Col. iii. 20.) The obvious, the only logical, and consistent inference which we can draw is, that the "saints" at Colosse, not only consisted of old, but young; not only of parents, but children.

Now, it has been before shown that as far as adults are concerned, the term "saint" has both a higher and lower signification; sometimes representing the sanctification of inward renewal, and sometimes only of external separation from heathenism, and dedication to the service of Christ by Baptism. Hence the circumstance that children are here addressed as "saints," equally with adults, justifies us in maintaining that the Baptismal saintship of the one is attributable also to the other. Over and above this consideration, however, it may be well to look at the manner in which St. Paul addressed children in his Epistle to the Ephesians.

It will be seen that while he expressly writes to the "saints which are at Ephesus," and to the "faithful in Christ Jesus" (chapter i. 1); he yet includes children among this holy brotherhood, without any limitation or qualification: "Children obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right." (Chapter vi. 1.) He speaks to them here as being bound by the sanctions of the Gospel covenant; for he does not tell them to obey their parents on the ground of mere moral duty, but of high Christian principle; he treats them as having covenant obligations and responsibilites to Christ, just like other persons.

If any should say that this is making too much of the language here employed, let them look to what follows:—"Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth." (Verses 2, 3.) Now here let it be noticed that a covenant promise is quoted from the law of Moses, which the children whom St. Paul addresses might claim, upon their obedience to its prescribed conditions. How could this have been? They were the children of heathen converts. What then had they to do with the promises

of the Jewish covenant? Supposing them to have been neither circumcised nor baptized, this form of address seems utterly incomprehensible; for it must have been made to them as members of the covenant, although they had no union with that covenant! If, however, these children had been baptized into Christ, and made partakers of the promises of the Gospel, all is plain; for the New Testament covenant includes the sanction of God's moral law in the Old Testament, and therefore conveys to all its members a general inheritance of the promise of the fifth commandment. But otherwise, the passage becomes unintelligible on any true principles of interpretation.

(c) *The manner in which the Apostles spoke of whole Christian Households.*

There are three Households mentioned in the New Testament as having been at once baptized upon the conversion of their owners; viz., the Household of the Philippian Jailor, of Lydia, and of Stephanas. Now touching these cases, it is invariably alleged by the Baptists that there is no evidence of such Households containing children, and that consequently the mention of them proves nothing. To this it may fairly be replied,

that even though the allegation be correct, yet the inference is wrong. Suppose, for the sake of argument, that we allow the Jailor, and Lydia, and Stephanas, to have had no infants in their Households. This is a most unnecessary concession to make; but it shall be freely made notwithstanding, in order to show how little our argument is affected by it. For the simple fact still remains; viz., that the Apostles were in the habit of baptizing "*Households.*" The mere question, therefore, as to whether the Jailor, or the Purple-seller, or Stephanas, were persons who possessed little children in their houses, has nothing whatever to do with the real point before us. These particular cases, introduced incidentally into the narrative of the early promulgation of Christianity, could not have stood alone. They are only useful as illustrating the customs of the early Church; viz., that Baptism was administered to whole Households. Consequently the concession just made to these three specified cases, becomes completely neutralized. For granting that no clear evidence of Infant life can be necessarily found in three particular Households taken at random over a large area of country; it is far otherwise when we recollect that those three cases were only specimens

of hundreds of others. Add to the three Households here mentioned, the large number of other Household Baptisms which took place elsewhere, and it becomes a great deal more improbable that infants were excluded from the latter, than that they were included in the former. It must be continually borne in mind, that the true argument is of this nature. It does not lie in the necessity of Stephanas or Lydia having had Infants in their homes when their Households were baptized; but in the simple fact that, as Baptism went by Households after the conversion of their owners, *other* Households must at all events have contained Infants. The position therefore, is simply this:—Would the said writers have used the expression Household Baptism when, *as a general rule*, Infants and little children must have been included in such Households, unless the practice of Infant Baptism had been common? Is it likely that the Spirit of God would have sanctioned the use of this inclusive term, the fundamental basis of which implied the existence of little children, if it had been intended that all the younger members of the Household should be excluded from the sacrament? Would it not naturally, and almost neces-

sarily have misled the Church? Would it have been consistent, moreover, with the ordinary form and use of language? What Baptist minister would ever dream of saying that he was in the habit of baptizing the families of his congregation by Households? If he were to say it, some of his more cautious brethren would immediately remonstrate with him, and reply—"Be careful, dear brother, lest you mislead those with whom you speak; for you know that you always omit the children." The whole supposition, however, is imaginary; for it would never enter even into the imagination of a Baptist to talk in such a manner. It therefore becomes obvious that the terms which are employed by that body about Baptism, are not capable of being harmonized with the words of Scripture; and that had the Baptist persuasion existed in the first century, its ministers could not have agreed with the Apostles in their choice and use of language upon this subject.

(d) *The manner in which the Apostles spoke of the Christian Covenant as mainly identical with the Abrahamic.*

The Christian covenant is called, by way of emphasis, the Covenant of Grace; for, "by Grace

are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God." (Eph. ii. 8). It is also called the New Covenant (Heb. viii. 13): new—not in respect to its origin, for it is everlasting (Heb. xiii. 20); nor yet in respect to its reception, for all who were saved under the Old Testament must have been so only through grace, and by faith in the coming Redeemer: but simply new in respect to the method of its manifestation, and to the perpetuity of its dispensation. For which reasons it is also called the Better Covenant (Heb. viii. 6); better, that is to say, than the Mosaic Covenant, that being abrogated for ever, while this abides for ever; that only carrying with it death and the curse, while this imparts life and peace; that being a revelation of God to one single nation, while this extends to the whole world; that imparting temporal promises to a fleshly seed, while this gives eternal promises to a spiritual seed, viz., to all those who are "born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." (John i. 13.)

But though essentially differing from, and superior to the Mosaic Covenant, St. Paul shows very plainly, that it was identical with the Abrahamic. He proves for instance, in his Epistle to the Gala-

tians, that the promise of salvation through grace was expressly given by way of covenant to Abraham; and that the Law which came four hundred and thirty years afterwards could not possibly disannul the promise, or alter the covenant. (Gal. iii. 16, 17.) So in his Epistle to the Romans, he no less proves that God has had but one way of justifying sinners from the beginning; viz., through grace and by faith, without the deeds of the law; illustrating the whole basis of the Gospel Covenant by the Covenant which God made at first with Abraham. (Rom. iv.) For this reason all believers in Christ are called the "Seed of Abraham," whether they be Jews or Gentiles. "Know ye, therefore, that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. (Gal. iii. 7.) "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." (Gal. iii. 29.)

Nothing can be clearer from all this, than that God's Covenant with Abraham and with the believing Christian are one; being a Covenant of Grace inherited by faith, without any preparatory or justificatory works of righteousness. (Rom. iv. 5.) In other words, our own faith holds the same relationship to the Gospel Covenant that Abraham's faith

did; it being imputed, in both cases, for righteousness, and being called the "righteousness of faith."

But if the Abrahamic and the Gospel Covenant be indentical in their method of justification, what is to be said of them in reference to their appointed sacramental signs? Outwardly, there was no identity between these; for nothing could well be more different than Circumcision and Baptism. Looking away, however, from the outward forms to the spiritual truths which those forms were designed to typify, we find that they have exactly the same relationship. For what was Circumcision but a sign of that mortification of the flesh, and deadness of the heart to sin, which Baptism sets forth with so much plainness? (Col. ii. 11, 12.) Hence the thing signified in each sacrament, being the same, while the signs, or external ceremonies only were different; we arrive at a still closer analogy, or degree of identity between the Abrahamic and the Gospel Covenant.

The analogy may be stated thus. Abraham believed and was justified by the righteousness of faith. In like manner, an adult convert from heathenism believes, and is justified by the righteousness of faith. Again, Abraham visibly entered

into covenant with God by Circumcision, which was given to him as a sign and seal of this righteousness of faith. In like manner, an adult convert from heathenism visibly enters into covenant with God by Baptism, which is given to him as a sign and seal of this righteousness of faith. (Acts ii. 38, 39.) Thus Circumcision was to Abraham, exactly what Baptism was to an ancient adult Christian believer. Faith preceded it, holiness was implied by it, the promises of salvation though grace were sealed in it. Consequently as far as Abraham and *adult* Christians are concerned, it is incontrovertible that Circumcision and Baptism perform the same offices, and are memorials or badges of one and the same covenant.

"But what has this to do," it may be asked, "with Infant Baptism? You are overlooking the fact, that the conditions tied up to Baptism are different from those of Circumcision; conditions which no Infant can satisfy, and which are tantamount, therefore, to an express abrogation of the Infant covenant; for it is said, 'He that *believeth* and is baptized,' etc.: 'If thou *believest* with all thine heart thou mayest.'" (Acts viii.)

To this we reply, that things which are analo-

gous in character, ought only to be looked at and judged, when placed in exactly corresponding positions. It is not fair, for example, to compare the Circumcision of Isaac with the Baptism of an adult heathen convert, nor the Baptism of an Infant of Christian parents with the Circumcision of Abraham; because the circumstances under which these persons were introduced into the covenant, were in no way corresponding or parallel. To be logical, and consistent with right reason, the Circumcision of Isaac ought to be compared only with the Baptism of a child of a believing Christian; and the Baptism of an adult heathen convert only with the Circumcision of Abraham. Putting the cases thus, let us see what will come of them. An adult heathen convert simply receives Baptism on his faith. Now that was exactly the ground on which Abraham received Circumcision. "He received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had, yet being uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised." (Rom. iv. 11.) What follows from the text? One thing most undoubtedly; viz., that Abraham could have had no Circumcision except

by virtue of his faith. In other words, according to the original institution of this Abrahamic rite, it was only a believer's sacrament, a seal of pre-existing faith; and the cases of Adult Circumcision and Adult Baptism are, therefore, exactly parallel, —the one is in the place of the other. Let us now compare the other two cases. How was it that Abraham's son Isaac, being an infant of only eight days old, was admitted into this believer's covenant? He had no pre-existing faith. How then, could he become partaker of a ceremony, which was the seal of a faith actually *non-existing*? Obviously the faith which was sealed in Isaac's Circumcision, was not his own, but his father's; the faith of the believing parent being graciously accepted in place of that of his Infant, and by virtue of it the child being considered worthy of participation in the covenant. Now if this transfer of a believer's Circumcision to *his* infant child was sanctioned by the covenant of grace made with Abraham, why should not the same covenant of grace made with ourselves equally allow the transfer of a believer's Baptism to *his* infant child? Is this one whit less reasonable, or scriptural than the other? The only reply left is, that Infant Circumcision was actually *command-*

ed; whereas Infant Baptism was not commanded. Of course it was not! Because it followed, as a necessity, from the former. For *Infant* Circumcision being authoritatively included in the original institution of *Adult* Circumcision, it followed that when *adult* Baptism took the place of Adult Circumcision, it must have equally carried along with it the principle of *Infant* Baptism also. It wanted no command to authorize this application of the new sacramental seal to infants, when it was so fundamentally bound up with the old sacramental seal, and when both of them were, in the same degree and relation, originally granted to adult believers only. Why should there have been any doubt about it? If the Lord honoured Abraham's faith by telling him that it should not only be sealed by Circumcision in his own person, but by the admission of all his children into the same covenant also; why should the faith of an adult Christian believer be less honoured now? Are children less loved than of old? (Mark x. 14.) Is faith less powerful? Is the covenant less rich and gracious? Let it be remembered that, in either case, we are speaking of a covenant of salvation by grace, not of the covenant under the

law. If, then, Abraham's children were admitted into the covenant of grace on the faith of their father, why may not the children of an adult who has been converted to Christianity from heathenism be equally admitted into the same covenant of grace on the faith of *their* father? As the first ground of Infant Circumcision consisted in this, that the faith of Abraham stood for his children, and the covenant given to him included them; why are we to suppose it otherwise at present? Where has God's determination to alter this part of the covenant of grace been recorded? What text can be alleged which in any way deprives little children of their right to participation in this covenant? On the contrary, there is direct evidence the other way, inasmuch as Baptism was administered by Households. Besides which, is it not distinctly said that the "gifts and callings of God are without repentance"? (Rom. xi. 29.) If God, therefore, once "called" children into His covenant of grace because of their father's faith, on what authority do we dare to say that God has repented or changed His purpose? By what law are we to change God's covenant with Infants, and deprive our children of a blessing which

has been solemnly instituted by the unchangeable Jehovah?

It may be replied, that the covenant *has* been changed,—Baptism being so essentially different from Circumcision. Outwardly, no doubt it is, as before stated. But how can any external alteration in the sign of a covenant, prove a necessary alteration in the covenant itself? The mode of confirming an agreement externally may be altered in a hundred different ways, yet the agreement remain intact. For instance, when the Lord promised to make Moses the deliverer of Israel, He first confirmed His agreement with him by authorizing him to change his rod into a serpent, and afterwards by afflicting his hand with leprosy. Now here were two distinct signs or seals to God's covenant promise; nevertheless there was no change in the promise itself. In the same way, *Abel's* sacrifice of the firstlings of his flock was a memorializing of the covenant promise, that Christ should expiate sin; whereas *we* memorialize the accomplishment of the same covenant promise, by partaking of "bread and wine;" for "as oft as ye eat this bread, and drink this wine, ye do shew forth the Lord's death till He come." (1 Cor. xi.) Here again, the out-

ward signs of the covenant are extremely different; nevertheless the covenant, and the things signified therein, remain unchanged. In like manner although Baptism has now been made a sign of the covenant of grace instead of Circumcision, there is no necessary change in the covenant itself. If there *be* any such change, it must at any rate be proved. Where then, is it noticed? Where is it said in the New Testament that Infant membership in the covenant has been abrogated? On the contrary, Jesus took up little children in His arms and blessed them, saying "Of such IS the kingdom of God."

Pressed with these difficulties, which are unanswerable, another argument is generally alleged by the opponents of Infant Baptism, though with no better success. It is urged that Baptism under the Gospel covenant cannot be analogous with Circumcision under the Abrahamic covenant, because the latter in its application to Infants was designed only to mark out a visible nation; it was merely a political and social badge of separation from the rest of the world, by means of which it pleased God to establish and consolidate a kingdom for His own especial government, consisting of Abraham's chil-

dren after the flesh. Whereas, under the Gospel, the children of Abraham by natural descent are counted no more than the heathen, unless they inherit Abraham's faith, and become his spiritual children also; for "they which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted for the seed." (Rom. xi. 8.) It is therefore contended that, as under the Gospel, God has no purpose of raising up a fleshly seed by Baptism, but only a spiritual seed, its application to infants is quite out of place.

But to what purpose is all this reasoning, when, although it is based on some amount of truth, it suppresses another point of truth equally conservative of what is spiritual? No man denies that *one* purpose of the Circumcision of Infants was to secure a lineal descent of Israelites after the flesh, in order that they might be separated and perpetuated as God's own visible kingdom? And, therefore, so far as that design of God was concerned in the application of His covenant to Infants, it can certainly furnish us with no basis for the doctrine of Infant Baptism. Candour and common sense must teach all men this. But was that the

only purpose God had in applying this rite of Circumcision to Infants? Was there no spiritual significancy in it, implying a higher and more blessed relationship to God's covenant than that of political citizenship? Observe the spirituality which St. Paul puts on this ancient sacrament,—"He is not a Jew which is one outwardly: neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew which is one inwardly: and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter." (Rom. ii. 28, 29.) Nor was this the result only of New Testament teaching. Jeremiah spoke almost as plainly to his generation. "Circumcise yourselves to the Lord, and take away the foreskin of your heart." (Jer. iv. 4.) Nor was Moses less decided. "Circumcise, therefore, the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiff-necked." (Deut. x. 16.) Does not this show that beneath the outward sign, there was a spiritual thing signified; and that the administration of the ceremony to Infants carried along with it deeper obligations and privileges, than those which belonged to political citizenship, or to social duties? To make this still plainer, let us read the Lord's promise to Israel, in Deut. xxx. 4.—"The Lord thy God will circum-

cise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest *live*." Now here the covenant promise is as clearly spiritual as it can be; it is simply salvation through grace; it is not the Mosaic covenant of works and death, but the Abrahamic covenant of grace and life. What reasonable man can doubt, with passages like these before him, that pious and believing Israelites looked upon the introduction of their children into covenant with God by Circumcision, as something far more precious and spiritual than their mere registration into the ranks of a visible nation?

Our argument, therefore, is this: Circumcision, so far as it signified a covenant of Israelitish nationality, finds no representative element in Christian Baptism. In so far, however, as it was a sign of the everlasting Covenant of Grace, and admitted children, on the faith of their fathers, into spiritual promises and privileges which otherwise they could not have enjoyed, it finds a distinct representative element in Christian Baptism, and cannot possibly be severed from it.

CHAPTER IV.

A FURTHER EXAMINATION OF CERTAIN ERRONEOUS REASONINGS BY WHICH INFANT BAPTISM IS OFTEN OPPOSED.

1. THE great error which underlies Baptist theology consists in a determination to overlook the exact circumstances which attended the institution of Baptism. When our Lord sent forth His disciples, it was not to children, who would have been unable to understand them; but to the adult population of Jerusalem, who were capable of reasoning and of judgment. Speaking of such persons, therefore, He necessarily laid down the command, that none should be baptized without repentance for sin, and faith in the Gospel message of salvation. (Mark xvi. 16.) As regards the children, however, of all those persons, and the application of Baptism to them, our Lord said nothing; at any rate, if so, His teaching has not been definitely pre-

served. To take this institution of Baptism, therefore, which, from the nature of the circumstances, was necessarily framed in exclusive relation to adults; and to say either, that because little children were not mentioned in it, or that because they cannot comply with the stipulations first given to adults, they must necessarily be excluded from Baptism altogether, is singularly illogical. Nor is it treating this part of Scripture as any other part of it is treated. Only test such a form of reasoning by one or two analogous cases. The syllogism of the Baptist theory on Mark xvi. 16, stands thus:—

> No one can be baptized unless he believes;
> But an infant cannot believe;
> *Ergo:* An infant cannot be baptized.

To show the futility of which, let the same form of reasoning be adopted in the following manner to Acts xvi. 31:—

> No one can be saved unless he believes;
> But an infant cannot believe;
> *Ergo:* An infant cannot be saved.

There is nothing like a good *reductio ad absurdum;* and this is one. The same form of syllogism

might be carried out to all sorts of ridiculous conclusions. St. Paul says, for instance, speaking obviously of adults—"If any will not work, neither shall he eat." (2 Thess. iii. 10); which might be travestied thus:—

> No one shall eat unless he works;
> But infants cannot work;
> *Ergo:* Infants shall not eat.

What silly, and yet cruel sophistry is this—first to take up commands which were intended for one set of persons; and afterwards, to subject another set of persons, not at all contemplated by the speakers, to exactly the same injunctions! One is lost in surprise at such a process in serious controversy.

Pressed with this difficulty, our opponents fall back on the admission just made; and urge that, as Baptism was primarily instituted for adults, we have no business to extend it to Infants, inasmuch as our Lord, if He had intended Infants to be included, would have doubtless said so. In reply to this, it may be sufficient to apply the syllogism which this argument involves, to some other case of a parallel nature. Now the syllogism is this:—

Baptism ought only to be administered to the class for whom it was primarily instituted;
But Baptism was primarily instituted for adults;
Ergo: Adults ought only to receive Baptism.

The parallel case to Baptism, is its twin sacrament, the Supper of the Lord, which was expressly instituted for the Apostles; that is to say, for men, not women. Upon which the following syllogism may be constructed:—

The Lord's Supper ought only to be received by the class for whom it was primarily instituted;
But the Lord's Supper was primarily instituted for men;
Ergo: Men ought only to receive the Lord's Supper.

The fact is, that the extension of the Lord's Supper to female communicants, was an adaptation of its original institution to meet the necessities of the Church. In like manner the extension of Adult Baptism to Infants was an adaptation of its original institution to meet the necessities of the Church.

2. Again: it is sometimes said, that if adult Baptism be lawfully extended to Infants, adult Communion at the Lord's Supper ought to be equally extended to them. At one period of the early

Church, this false inference actually was drawn; nor only drawn, but acted on also,—as plainly appears from Cyprian and Augustine.[5] The practice, however, soon became obsolete, because founded on no just *necessities* of the Church. In regard to Baptism the case was different. It will be shown in the next part of this treatise, that some of the deepest necessities of our nature are met and ministered to by the application of Baptism to Infants. But not so the application of the Lord's Supper to Infants. Reason and common sense at once teach the utter incongruity of such a proceeding. For the fundamental idea of the Lord's Supper is a commemoration of the death of Christ, founded on some past experience of it in the believer's soul;—an idea which in no conceivable manner seems to work in with the necessities of an unconscious Infant. On the other hand, the necessities of an Infant can never be independent of the fundamental idea attached to Baptism,—viz., an application of the benefit of Christ's death to its soul. To receive this by free grace, requires no preceding experience of the love of Christ in the case of a little child; *otherwise, no one dying in*

[5] August. ad Bonif. Lib. i.

Infancy could be saved. If, therefore, the benefits of the death of Christ are capable of application to an infant dying, their application seems, at least, possible, in the case of an infant living. Thus Infant Baptism rests on quite a different basis to that on which Infant Communion would rest; and it is simply preposterous to compare them; for we can never be too young to receive the benefits of redemption, whereas we may certainly be too young to commemorate them.

3. It is often alleged, again, that Infants are morally incapable of Baptism; because they are unconscious of what is being done for them, and can therefore be no true parties to any covenant engagements. But this objection is founded on a wrong notion of God's covenant with man. For although the word so used implies a mutual contract between the parties, yet man not being in the position of an independent party, the phrase must evidently be employed more by way of accommodation than of strict propriety. Strictly speaking, indeed, the whole covenant of grace is unconditional, and is more of a promise than a covenant. If certain engagements, therefore, are solemnly entered into at Baptism, this manner of

speaking is solely adopted for the purpose of preserving the form of language usual to the making a covenant, and that the phrase which it has pleased God to originate, as expressing the mutual relationship of responsibility existing between Himself and the Church, may not be lost sight of. We must always bear in mind that, from first to last, this covenant is of free grace.—Hence the contract of responsibility on God's side is only to fulfil His promises; while, on man's side, it is simply to accept and profit by them, because without those gifts and promises no obedience to the covenant could ever be rendered. How, then, does this bear upon Infant Baptism? Most plainly. For (1) as a man may seal a deed of gift to an Infant, though the child understand nothing about the transaction; so God may seal the covenant of grace by Baptism to an Infant, without making His promise of none effect. And as it would be foolish to say that a child's name ought not to be put into any deed of gift till he come of age to understand it; so it is unreasonable to say, that children may not be registered among the number of those to whom God gives the promises of grace, because they are at present too young to be con-

scious of them. And (2) as an adult, when he enters into the Baptismal contract, by which he engages to die unto sin and be mortified to the world, cannot do so in his own strength, but only in humble dependence on the free promises of grace; so an Infant may be introduced into this contract, inasmuch as his power of fulfilling it lies no more in himself than it does in the Adult,—both alike depending on the same grace of God. In addition to which, let us ask why an Infant should be considered morally incapable of entering into the covenant pledge of Baptism now, any more than formerly he was, of entering into the covenant pledge of Circumcision? The engagements of that covenant were many, especially after the law of Moses had been instituted. Yet our Lord never regarded Infants as incapacitated from entering into any of those engagements. Indeed Deut. xxix. 11, 12, unmistakeably shows that Infants were specially included in them. Why, then, should God consider Infants as now incapable of entering into the covenant engagements of Baptism? To maintain this is something very much like attacking one of the fundamental principles of God's moral government, and accusing Him of not

knowing how to order the discipline of His own Church.

4. This objection, however, sometimes takes another form. It is alleged that no one has any moral right to place an Infant under the solemn obligations and responsibilities which attend Baptism, at a time when it is utterly unconscious of what is being transacted, is quite unable to prevent it, and yet must inevitably bear the weight of all its consequences, not only through time but eternity. It is surely needless to observe, however, that if this style of argument were once allowed, it would prove utterly subversive of some of the first principles of parental rights and duties. The same allegation might be applied to a variety of conditional blessings which are conferred by faithful parents on their children. When they teach them, for example, the art of reading and writing, are not the benefits thereby communicated full of heavy, moral responsibility;—responsibility which, whether viewed in relation to time or eternity, is vastly greater than such children would have had, if allowed to grow up in hopeless and helpless ignorance? Most assuredly. For "to whom much is given, of them will much be required." The

same remark may be made with still greater force in reference to the education of children on the basis of Christian truth and doctrine. Either of these courses of conduct on the part of faithful parents, involves the imposition of solemn obligations and responsibilities on children, at a time when they are quite unable to understand the full bearing of them, when they have practically no power to prevent the circumstance, yet must bear the weight of their consequences throughout time and eternity.

According to this argument, therefore, those parents must have been doing wrong in conveying such mingled blessings and responsibilities to their children; they ought rather to have waited till their children had become adults, and could have given their assent and consent thereto. Who does not see the unreasonableness of this position? Who can deny the moral propriety of that law of nature which so universally obtains ascendency over human actions, by which parents assume the duty of judging for their children on all points connected with their secular and religious education? Without this, how could society hold together? How would the rising generation be pre-

pared to play its appointed part in the great drama of life? Above all, how would Christian parents answer at the bar of God for neglecting to indoctrinate their children with Divine truth, and to "bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord"?

More might be said on other points, but these seem sufficient,—especially as the object of the present work is not so much to provide a full and exhaustive defence of Infant Baptism, as to supply a somewhat necessary link between the first and third parts of the treatise, for the edification of those who wish to study the subject in a logical and methodical order.

CHAPTER IV.

HISTORIC EVIDENCE OF INFANT BAPTISM.

It will not be necessary to write fully upon this part of the subject; for if what has been written already does not satisfy the mind of a reader, nothing that can be added here will do so.

In speaking upon historical evidence, however, it should be borne in mind that where controversies have never arisen about any particular practice, it is not antecedently probable that much will be found bearing upon it in ancient authors. We do not expect to find any great evidence, for example, touching the admission of women to the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper; simply, because it was practised as a matter of course, attracted no particular attention, and met with no opposition. The most we could dream of discovering, therefore, would be incidental allusions to the custom, or expressions which implied it without any actual mention of

the fact. Take again the present controversy, as to the plenary Inspiration of Scripture. We have no Article upon this subject in the Prayer-book; simply, because the rationalistic controversy had not arisen in the Reformation period. No one, however, would affirm on that account, that the Reformers did not believe in the full Inspiration of Scripture. On the contrary, we take the expressions used in the Sixth Article as implying, though not expressing it; and we are satisfied with historical evidence of a totally different kind from that which we should demand, had the controversy been really raised at the time when the Prayer-book was written.

It is only fair to apply these thoughts to the practice of Infant Baptism at the time when it was followed without dispute; viz., during the first two centuries. If, during that time, much was not said about it, we need scarcely wonder. Nevertheless, quite sufficient is said. Justin Martyr, for instance, who was born about the time of St. John's death, says in one of his Apologies:[x] "There are many of us, of both sexes, some sixty, and some seventy years old, who were made disciples from their

[x] Justin Martyr. Apol. ii., p. 62.

childhood." Again in his Dialogue with Trypho the Jew, Justin Martyr makes Baptism parallel to Circumcision, saying, "We have not received that carnal circumcision, but the spiritual circumcision which Enoch and those like him observed. And we have received it by Baptism."[y] Iræneus also, who was a disciple of Polycarp the disciple of St. John, when writing about original sin, says,—"Christ came to save all persons by Himself; all who are by Him regenerated to God; infants, and little children, and youths, and elder persons."[z] And that Regeneration was with him equivalent to Baptism, is well known, for he expressly calls it so in many places.[a]

So far ancient testimony seems quite as plain as we could expect. But now it becomes much plainer. For Tertullian, at the beginning of the third century set himself violently to oppose the practice of Infant Baptism, not as being contrary to Scripture; not as being inconsistent with Apostolic custom; but simply as in *his* opinion, undesirable. This father advocated the postponement of Baptism till chil-

[y] Justin Martyr's Dialogue, p. 261.

[z] Iræneus. Lit. ii., cap. 39.

[a] Idem. Lit. i., cap. 18.

dren were grown up, in order that they might better know what they were doing, and that salvation might be given to them when they asked for it in faith, and so prove in the end a greater blessing. But does not this most triumphantly illustrate the *custom* of Infant Baptism? For why should he argue the point unless the practice had been common? Besides, he openly alludes to the custom as general, and evidently writes as an advocate of something new. He even speaks of sponsors for children, and in genuine Anti-pædo-Baptist style contends that the institution is unsafe for them. "What need is there" he asks, "that the sponsors should be brought into danger? Because they may either fail of their promises by death, or they may be deceived by a child proving of wicked disposition."[b] The value of this quotation is, that it shows how sponsorship and Infant Baptism were practised side by side at the close of the second century. Although it marks the existence of an ancient dissension from these primitive customs; yet it does not in any way disprove or invalidate, but rather augments the force of historic testimony in favour of their Apostolic authority.

[b] Tertul. de Baptism, c. 18.

If we pass from Tertullian to Origen, this evidence is even stronger. He says, "Infants are baptized for the forgiveness of sins. Of what sins? Or when did they commit them? Or how can any reason be given for baptizing them, but only according to that sense which we mentioned a little before? None is free from pollution, though his life be but the length of a day. And for that reason Infants are baptized; because by the sacrament of Baptism the pollution of our birth is taken away."[c] In another place, he openly declares "the Church received it from the Apostles that they should give Baptism to Infants."[d]

We need not go further; because, after this, the testimonies become multitudinous. It may be enough to add in conclusion, that whether we look to the historical evidences of early Christianity, to evidences furnished by the New Testament, or to those provided by the Old Testament, the admission of Infants into Covenant with God has always been acknowledged lawful and followed as a matter of custom. In other words, the covenant standing of the parents has ever been recognized as sufficient

[c] Orig. in Luc. Hom. xiv., t. 2, p. 223.

[d] Idem., in Rom. lib. v., cap. 6, p. 543.

to justify the reception by their children of the sacramental seal of the covenant; and the infection or taint of original sin has never been regarded as *any* barrier, under such circumstances, to their acceptance by a gracious God.

PART III.

The Covenant Blessings of Infant Baptism.

"Nothing more execrable or detestable can be said or thought than that when the form of Baptism is imparted to Infants, it is unreal or fallacious; in that remission of sins is spoken of and appears to be given, and yet is not at all effected.

"The infernal poisoner struck the whole mass of mankind in the first man. No one passes to the second man from the first, except through the Sacrament of Baptism. In children born and not yet baptized, let Adam be acknowledged: in children born and baptized, and on that account regenerated, let Christ be acknowledged."

ST. AUGUSTINE.

PREPARATORY REMARKS.

It is of great importance to observe the order of thought which has been followed in this treatise. Many persons confuse their minds in relation to the effects of Infant Baptism by plunging at once into the controversy without having marked out any clear line of argument from well ascertained principles. The consequence is, they often exhibit a *petitio principii* which exposes their whole front and flank to the attacks of their opponents, and weakens a cause which is otherwise invulnerable.

By the course adopted here, however, this evil is avoided. No position is begged; no argument is assumed. Beginning with Baptism as administered to believing Adults concerning which Scriptural statements are both clear and decided; and then following with a proof that Baptism may on Scriptural principles be administered also to the Infant children of such believers; it follows that the Covenant blessings of the Sacrament in this

latter case must be just the same as in the former case, limited only by certain qualifying circumstances connected with the age of the recipients.

It will be our object, therefore, through the remaining portion of this inquiry, carefully to retrace our footsteps, and endeavour to see how far the Covenant blessings of Adult Baptism may be applied to the Baptism of Infants; always supposing as the Church does that these Infants are presented to God in true faith, and making due allowance for the altered conditions under which the Sacrament is then administered. Each chapter of the First Part will thus be re-discussed in this Third Part, beginning with the point where we ended, and working our way backwards, until we at last reach that which is really the *crux* of the controversy, Infant Regeneration.

CHAPTER I.

THE COMMUNICATION OF SACRAMENTAL GRACE TO INFANTS.

BISHOP Ridley, the Martyr, says—"True it is, every sacrament hath grace annexed to it instrumentally. But there are divers understanding of that word 'habet,' 'hath;' for the sacrament hath not grace included in it, but to those that receive it well, it is turned to grace. After that manner the water in Baptism hath grace promised, and by that grace the Holy Ghost is given; not that grace is included in the water, but that grace cometh by the water."[e]

This passage proves how our best Protestant divines were in the habit of using the word Grace in direct connection with Baptism; even whilst fighting most strenuously against the dogma of an *opus operatum*. We are not ashamed, as evangelical

[e] Disputation at Oxford.

theologians, to stand by the side of these men. Let us inquire, therefore, in what this grace consists.

The preceding chapter on this subject was divided into two parts; the grace of Acceptance, and the grace of Privilege.

Considerable caution will be required in applying these promised gifts of Baptism to the case of Infants, so many of whom grow up without giving any evidence of effectual saving grace in their souls. Indeed there are few things more fatal to the progress of spiritual religion then a bold and unguarded statement upon this subject; so that the utmost nicety should be used in setting it out.

It has been already shown in the case of Adults that there are two classes who apply for Baptism; viz., the genuine believer who truly repents of his sins, and the merely formal believer who has no real repentance. With regard to Infants, however, there is no room for any distinction of this kind; inasmuch as they are personally incapable of repentance; neither do they need repentance for Actual sin, not having committed any, and being only separated from God on account of the effects of Original sin. Now these effects are two-fold; viz., Condemnation and Infection: to remedy the first of which our

Lord Jesus Christ offered the atonement; to take away the second of which He obtained the gift of the Holy Ghost. Hence when God acknowledges Infants to be rightly received into His covenant, on the professed faith of those who present them to Him in Baptism, the only grace which we suppose to be conferred in this sacrament is, that it transfers them from their natural state of guilt and condemnation through the first Adam, into a new covenant condition of mercy in the second Adam; the penalty due to original sin being remitted, and the infection resulting from it coming within range of the covenant influence of the Holy Ghost. These blessings, however, do not necessarily carry with them any actual renovation of the moral nature. They only bring the children baptized under shelter of God's covenant mercy in relation to the *penal* consequences of Original sin, and place them within the radius of the Holy Spirit's operations, in relation to the *infecting* consequences of Original sin. What the issue of this shall be, is known only to God in His divine sovereignty. In some cases it may be "grace received in vain" (1 Cor. vii. 1); in other cases it may be grace finally saving and triumphant. But whatever may result

ultimately, it is not necessarily and universally true that an Infant once baptized beomes *ipso facto* renewed in its moral nature.

These statements will be not only confirmed by all that follows, but will be seen to flow legitimately and logically from what has preceded. For whatever Baptism was considered in relation to Adults, that it must remain in its adaptation to Infants; else we rob it of its integrity as a sacrament, and change the character of its administration without any justifiable warrant.

Consider it first, then, with regard to the *Grace of Acceptance.*

The Ninth Article of our Church says that Original sin "in every person born into the world, deserveth God's wrath and damnation." In other words, to quote Bishop Browne on the Articles,—"As Adam by sin became subject to wrath and death, so all men are subject to the same wrath and death; because, by having a nature in itself sinful, they are, even without the commission of actual sin, yet sinners before God, and esteemed as 'having sinned.'" Infants, therefore, are by nature, and apart from the work of Christ, condemned to death; being in a state of outlawry

from God. They are not condemned for any overt act of sin, because they are as yet unconscious and perfectly irresponsible. The former ground would, however, be quite sufficient to separate them from God, if it were not for the redemption of Jesus Christ. But through that blessed redemption a provision has now been made by which God consents to put away all this condemnation due to Original sin. (Rom. v. 15.) The question is—Does Baptism confer this grace upon Infants? We answer, Yes. For in the case of Adults, the repentance demanded of them as a pre-requisite for Baptism, has exclusive reference to their own personal sins; inasmuch as no one can possibly repent, in any proper sense of the word, for Adam's sin. He may feel sorry for it, and mourn over its consequences; but it is morally impossible he should repent of it. Hence when an Infant is baptized, and God consents to receive it by that means into His covenant of grace,—Repentance not being needed personally in the absence of all personal sin, and Faith being professedly represented by those who present the child to God,—the full covenant blessing of Baptism must remain; otherwise the original promise of God attached to the sacra-

ment has become nugatory. Consequently the child is at once accepted in Baptism for Christ's sake, as free from the condemnation due to Original sin; and whenever in late years that child repents and believes the Gospel, he will be no less accepted for Christ's sake, as free from the condemnation due to his Actual sin.

If an Infant could speak at its Baptism, it might use the words of a popular hymn, and cry—

> "Just as I am,—without one plea,
> But that Thy blood was shed for me,
> And that Thou bids't me come to Thee,—
> O Lamb of God, I come."
>
> *Mark* x. 14.

That is to say, the Infant comes to be accepted, so far as the nature of the case will allow, not on account of sins to be committed subsequently; for in regard to those, there can be no Baptismal blessing except through future Repentance and Faith; but simply on account of the remission of the guilt and condemnation due to Original sin, and for which the Infant might be justly excluded from God, except through becoming in this manner a covenant partaker of redemption.

Let us look secondly, at the *Grace of Privilege.*

It has before been shown that the gift of the Holy Spirit invariably accompanies the remission of sins in Adult Baptism (Acts ii. 39); and that this gift[f] was not necessarily miraculous,—the Spirit of God entering the soul as a divine Indweller, and confirming it in the life of faith unto which it had been already previously renewed.[g] Now in the case of Infants, there is no such previous renewal by the Spirit; there is no life of faith, for there is no conscious intelligence. On the contrary, their souls are presented to God in Baptism, not only while suffering from the Condemnation, but from the Infection of Original sin. That Infection, however, is invisible and dormant; so that at present God makes no demand from them of repentance for any overt outbreak of evil, but simply receives them into a covenant of Privilege and Responsibility, within which they may afterwards repent, believe, and be saved. The question then is,—"Does the Holy Spirit so accompany the sacrament as to abide in any way afterwards with these baptized Infants? Having entered into the benefit of Christ's Redemption and received deliverance from the Condemnation of Original sin, do

[f] See page 20. [g] See page 21.

they enter also into the benefit of the Holy Spirit's operations, and so receive Privileges which may ultimately deliver them from the Infection of Original sin?" We reply, Yes. We cannot dissociate the work of the Holy Spirit from Baptism; because Scripture never contemplates any reception of the sign, without the accompanying presence of the thing signified. To what extent then, does the Holy Spirit work in Infant Baptism? What He does in relation to the Condemnation of Original sin we have already seen; for He so far admits the soul of the Infant into the benefits of Redemption, that all the penalties due to it on account of Adam's transgression are immediately remitted. But how does the Spirit work in the Baptism of Infants, with regard to the Infection of Original sin? This operation we can only understand by referring it back again to the case of Adults. Now in their case, let it be remembered, the Spirit has already produced a renewal of the moral nature, through repentance and faith. But in this case any such change of nature is incapable of actual proof, seeing that Infants have not the power either of repentance or faith. The most, therefore, which can be properly said of this part of the Holy Spirit's work in Infant

Baptism is, that He promises, by way of covenant mercy, to attend the soul of the child as a purifying agent, always working, where life is preserved, in concurrence with Christian instruction,—striving and constraining lovingly, when the child is brought up in the "nurture and admonition of the Lord." Thus, if the child die in Infancy, Infection becomes annihilated through the sovereign grace of the Holy Ghost, without the use of any human means of instruction. If the child, on the other hand, live, he will always have a Spiritual Agent by his side, to bless every duly appointed means of grace; for it is a generally established law of the divine economy, that God works through His own appointed instrumentalities. This covenant Privilege may, however, be lost, either by the unfaithfulness of the educators, or by the unbelief and inveterate insensibility of the child educated. Or it may be fostered, and welcomed by both parties, and issue in a full renewal unto eternal life. Such is the *Grace of Privilege.*

That this was the doctrine of the Reformers is patent to all who know their writings. Melancthon says—"In Adults, repentance and faith are required; but with respect to Infants, it is sufficient

to hold that the Holy Spirit is given to them in Baptism, who works in them new stirrings of heart, new inclinations towards God, in accordance with the circumstances of their state and condition."[h] Becon in his "Catechism of the Sacraments," puts the following questions and answers:—

"*Father.* To what end art thou baptized?

"*Son.* First, that Baptism should be to my conscience a sure testimony and witness of God's favour toward me, through His Son Jesus Christ, against the subtle assaults of Satan, the world and the flesh.

"*Father.* Of what favour from God is Baptism a sign and testimony to thee?

"*Son.* Baptism declareth evidently to me that God doth so dearly love and favour me that whereas before I was an heathen, I am now become a Christian."

Hooker, who though not exactly one of our Reformers, is an universally revered father of our Church, says—"The grace which is given them with their Baptism does so far forth depend on the

[h] Melancthon, Loci Theologici. De Baptismo Infantium.

very outward sacrament, that God will have it embraced not only as a sign or token of what we receive, but also as an instrument or means whereby we receive grace, because Baptism is a sacrament which God hath instituted in His Church, to the end that they which receive the same might thereby be incorporated into Christ, and so through His most precious merit, obtain as well that saving grace of imputation which taketh away all former guiltiness, as also that infused divine virtue of the Holy Ghost which giveth to the powers of the soul their *first disposition* towards future newness of life."[1] Almost more striking, however, than this, is the practical, rather than theological, testimony of the good old nonconformist, Matthew Henry. "For my own part," he says, "I cannot but take this occasion to express my gratitude to God for my Infant Baptism, not only as it was an early admission into the visible body of Christ, but as it furnished my pious parents with a good argument (and I trust through grace, with a prevailing argument), for an early dedication to God in my childhood. If God has wrought any good work upon my soul, I desire with humble thankfulness

[1] Eccl. Pol. B. v., chap. 60, § 2.

to acknowledge the moral influence of my Baptism upon it."[j]

It may seem a violent change, perhaps, to go back from a modern nonconformist to an ancient father; but the importance of St. Augustine's testimony, whose evangelical theology is so universally admitted, appears too great to be omitted. Let us listen to him "From the little child but lately born, to the decrepid old man, as no one is to be prohibited from Baptism, so there is no one who in Baptism dies not unto sin: but little children only to Original sin; elder persons, however, die unto all those sins also, whatsoever by ill living they had added to that which they derived from birth."[k] Again, "If the child live after Baptism, and come to an age capable of obeying God's commandments, then he has that concupiscience to fight against, and with God's help to conquer, *if he have not received his grace in vain.*"[l]

[j] Quoted in "Bickersteth on Baptism."

[k] Enchiridion. Vol. xxii., p. 113. (Oxford translation.)

[l] Quoted in Sadler's "Second Adam and New Birth."

CHAPTER II.

INFANT ELECTION.

ALTHOUGH we learn from Scripture that God possesses an Elect people predestinated in Christ Jesus according to the good pleasure of His own will, all of whom are fully known and recognized before the Divine Mind; yet the Church on earth can only recognize this people by their external calling and consistent walk of faith and holiness, and not even then with certainty, inasmuch as the incohate grace which may be finally lost often presents for a while all the appearances of that saving grace which perseveres to the end. Thus in the preceding and corresponding chapter to this (Part I.), salvation was compared to a ladder let down between heaven and earth, whereof the top was Election and the bottom Vocation. God from the height above, can infallibly separate between those at the bottom whose Vocation may be either temporary or abiding, ineffectual or real.

The Church below, however, seeing through a more imperfect medium, must deal in large-hearted hope, giving all within the external body of Christ's Church the benefit of this blessed title, unless by the evil of their lives some forbid the possibility of such charity.

But touching the case of Infants, and especially those of truly believing parents, there cannot be any evils which forbid the indulgence of such charity. Let it once be granted, therefore, that Infants have been received by the Lord in their Baptism, and embraced in the arms of His gracious love through the faith of those who bring them to Him; and it certainly follows that, as they are designated therein, by external Vocation unto everlasting life, so by the law of Christian hope and love they are to be called God's elect children until a life of open unbelief shall prove them to be reprobate. Consequently, when the Church of England calls them such in her Service and Catechism, it is neither unreasonable nor unscriptural. Did not St. Paul address *all* those at Ephesus, to whom he wrote his Epistle, calling them Elect and predestinate? Yet children were included among the number; for he plainly addressed such, saying,

—"Children obey your parents." (Eph. vi. 1.) Who will argue that this text was not intended for every single child belonging to the Church of Christ in Ephesus? When, therefore, he called *all* the Ephesian children Elect, it could not be because they were necessarily so in the highest sense of the word; but because they were placed within the Church by means of external Baptism, and that was regarded by him, in the light of Christian hope, as the expression of their actual election to life eternal.

Hooker has some admirable remarks upon this subject, which may be very suitably introduced here. He says,—"Eternal Election includeth a subordination of means, without which we are not actually brought to enjoy what God did secretly intend: and, therefore, to build upon God's election, if we keep not ourselves to the ways which He hath appointed for men to walk in, is but a self-deceiving vanity. When the Apostle saw men called to the participation of Jesus Christ, after the Gospel of God embraced, and the Sacrament of life received, he feareth not then to put them in the number of Elect saints (Gal. i. 1); he then accounteth them delivered from death, and clean purged from all

sin. (Ephes. v. 8.) Till then (nothwithstanding their pre-ordination unto life, which none could know of, saving God), what were they in the Apostle's own account, but children of wrath, as well as others,—plain aliens, altogether without hope,—strangers, utterly without God in this present world? (Eph. ii. 3, 12.) So that by Sacraments, and other sensible tokens of grace, we may boldly gather, that He whose mercy vouchsafeth now to bestow the means, hath also long since intended us that whereunto they lead. But let us never think it safe to presume of our own last end by bare conjectural collections of His first intent and purpose, the means failing that should come between. Predestination bringeth not to life without the grace of external vocation, wherein our Baptism is implied. For as we are not naturally men without birth, so neither are we Christian men in the eye of the Church of God but by the new birth; nor according to manifest ordinary course of divine dispensation new born, but by that Baptism which both declareth and maketh us Christians. In which respect, we justly hold it to be the door of our actual entrance into God's house, the first apparent beginning of life; a seal perhaps to the grace of

Election before received; but to our sanctification here, a step that hath not any before it." [m]

The same great writer also remarks: "When we know how Christ in general hath said that 'of such is the kingdom of heaven,' which kingdom is the inheritance of God's elect; and do, withal, behold how His providence hath called them into the first beginnings of eternal life and presented them at the well-spring of New birth, wherein original sin is purged (beside which sin, there is no hindrance of their salvation known unto us); hard it were, that having so many fair inducements whereupon to ground, we should not be thought to utter, at least, a trust as probable and allowable, in terming any such particular Infant an Elect babe, as in presuming the like of others, whose safety, nevertheless, we are not absolutely able to warrant."

[m] Eccl. Pol. Book v., 60.

CHAPTER III.

INFANT ADOPTION.

If one thing has been more clearly shown than another in the first part of this Treatise, it is the Scripture use of the doctrine of Adoption, in reference both to covenant Privileges and to actual Salvation. We have not only proved it by the language of the Old and New Testaments; but we have shown from Boston and other writers of a similar school, that a double sense of this kind has been always attributed to Adoption.

Let this fact now be applied to Infant Baptism. The question is, to what extent such Baptism carries along with it the covenant blessings of Adoption? How may we consistently adapt this effect of the Sacrament when received by Adults, to the circumstances under which Infants receive it?

This point is deeply interesting; and, though

greatly cleared by the method through which we approach it, will nevertheless need considerable caution in its treatment.

We go back, as before, to the two classes of Adults which present themselves for Baptism; viz., genuine believers who bring with them true Repentance and Faith, and ephemeral believers who bring with them a sincere profession of these prerequisites, but without the presence of their abiding and saving properties. We have seen already that the first of these classes receive in Baptism an Adoption to Privileges and Inheritance which is absolute, irreversible, and eternal;[n] whereas the second receive only an Adoption to Privileges and Inheritance which is general, visible, and liable to be cut short for ever, unless followed by a more thorough and abiding Repentance in after life. As this distinction, however, is in no way capable of visibly being perceived by the Church during the ceremony of Baptism, and even the most careful ministerial discernment may fail to detect the temporary from the abiding spirit of Repentance, Adoption is charitably ascribed to Baptism without any qualification; care only being taken not to allow

[n] Page 81.

the Adult persons thus baptized to rest presumptuously on the notion of any absolute and irreversible title to Inheritance, for which reason prayer is offered for them, that "being now born again and made heirs," they "may *continue* God's servants, and *attain* His promises." This distinction between abiding and ephemeral belief is, in the case of Infants, unnecessary; seeing that personally, at the time of Baptism, they can have no Repentance or Faith of their own, but are simply presented to God for Adoption into His covenant of grace, through the representative faith of those who bring them. The Adoption, therefore, which is ascribed to Infants in their Baptism, is of a general nature. They are not necessarily made children of God by an assured relationship which is indefectible and eternal; for, if so, all baptized Infants would be saved, which no one supposes. At the same time they are relatively made such, by way of privilege and responsibility; and the Church, in her judgment of charity, has no right to suppose otherwise of them than that they will abide in their privileges to the end. Should any of them die before the commission of actual sin there can be no kind of doubt about the matter. In that case, on the

principles already laid down, the Guilt and Condemnation of Original sin being remitted, and the Infection of Original sin being annihilated, the liberated soul stands safely in God's Adopting love and grace, assured of its own sonship, and certain of an entrance into its everlasting Inheritance. On the supposition, however, that baptized Infants live and grow up to maturity, they come under one of two conditions; in relation to each of which we must now consider the effects of this holy Sacrament. In the first place, their parents, or their sponsors presenting them, may be true and faithful believers, who not only pray for their children but use all the appointed means of grace for their instruction in holiness. Under such circumstances, there is every assurance that God, having received them into His Covenant of Grace, will water the good seed sown, and make it fruitful; in which case they will gradually enter into a full enjoyment of their Adoption, considered even in its highest and most glorious meaning. In the second place, these presenting parties, either being themselves only temporary believers, or if otherwise negligent of their duties through spiritual indolence, may leave their children when baptized

to grow up in ignorance and folly. In which case, though the children bring forth nothing worthy of their holy calling, yet they are none the less adopted into God's visible family, and invested with a covenant sonship of privilege and inheritance. After what has preceded in our former chapter on Adult Adoption we need no proof of these statements. They follow as a matter of course. For the Sacrament, if capable of transfer from an Adult to an Infant, cannot but carry along with it its own covenant properties, as far as the nature of the case will allow; otherwise it is rendered null and void, and ceases to have any significance. In the absence of any real Repentance and Faith, therefore, these baptized children partake only of that general adoption which is liable to be cut short for ever by death; but which places them, while under a state of proffered grace, in a covenant of responsibility and privilege. Should they die in their sins, their adoption to be God's children in Baptism will then have proved itself only formal, visible, and ineffectual. Should they truly repent and believe, then their past Baptism may be recurred to as the visible seal of their Adoption, and be considered as conveying to them an absolute and

assured relationship to God, and to their everlasting inheritance.

It seems undeniable, however, that while all these possible eventualities are to be remembered, the Church of England in her Infant Baptismal Service charitably contemplates the administration of the Sacrament in the last sense; regarding all the parties concerned in it as sincere and godly; and relying on the full faithfulness of God to His covenant.

CHAPTER IV.

INFANT SANCTIFICATION.

THERE is an Infant Sanctification which we find throughout Scripture, marked by special and exceptional features, and which is limited in the sacred history to comparatively very few persons. The language employed by God concerning Jeremiah and John the Baptist will best explain what is meant. Thus, of Jeremiah it was said: "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee." (Jer. i. 5.) Of John the Baptist it was announced: "He shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb." (Luke i. 15.) It is obvious, from the manner in which these cases are here described that they were not common. The instance of Samuel, and that of a few others might be added; but the completed list would not be very large.

Are we on that account, however, to suppose that

there were no other forms of Infant Sanctification? Were no children accounted holy or sanctified unless they had received the Holy Ghost, by special grace, from their mother's womb, previous to their Circumcision or Baptism? We have not a shadow of evidence that Obadiah, the governor of Ahab's house, was among this number. Yet he says,—"I fear the Lord from my youth." (1 Kings xviii. 12.) Again, Timothy is in no way described as a born inheritor of this extraordinary sanctification by the Spirit. Yet St. Paul seems to credit him with Infant Sanctification, when he reminds him, saying,—"From a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation." (2 Tim. iii. 15.) At any rate St. Paul undoubtedly credited the children of his Ephesian and Colossian converts with Saintship, when he addressed them among the number of the "saints" to whom he was writing; and it would be evidently in the highest degree improbable to suppose that all those children were pre-sanctified at their birth like Jeremiah or John the Baptist.

Such being the case, we have only three other possible ways in which we can understand the Apostle speaking of Infant Sanctification.

(1) He may have meant to describe the separation of these children from the rest of the world by their external consecration unto God in Baptism, as explained on page 79. But this, though no doubt included in his meaning, can scarcely be supposed to fill up the whole measure of it; otherwise the effectual grace of Baptism, which we have all along been supposing to accompany its right reception, would be rendered perfectly nugatory, and the Sacrament itself be barely reduced to a sign or external badge by means of which one child is merely marked off from another.

(2) Did, then, the Apostle mean to say that these children had been so sanctified in Baptism, as to receive thereby a moral renovation of Nature? Were they all so inwardly renewed and purified as to be effectually sanctified in the highest and fullest sense of the word? He may possibly have called them "saints" in this sense, according to the judgment of charity; but surely not in literal exactness; unless we believe in the *opus operatum* of the Church of Rome. This faith, however, is not found in any of the early Fathers. St. Augustine distinctly denies it.[o] What then remains? In what other

[o] See Bishop Harold Browne on the Twenty-seventh Article.

way could the Apostle Paul have spoken of Infant Sanctification?

We answer:—

(3) He may have meant to credit them with it, on the ground of their having received the covenant gift of the Sanctifier in Baptism. The nature of this gift has been already shown (see pages 19—23), in reference to Adult Baptism. Following this, therefore, we mean to say that the Spirit of God vouchsafes His aid and presence within the child baptized, pleading with the conscience and blessing early Christian instruction communicated. Not by any means necessarily converting the child's soul; for all His gracious influence may be resisted; and so the renovation and Sanctification of the child may be long hindered or even lost. Nevertheless, the presence of the Sanctifier is there. In which respect, the State or Condition of the child may be termed a sanctified one; quite irrespective of the effect of that state upon the moral and spiritual character of the child as he enters into future life. These two things must never be confounded. Baptism gives us only a spiritual change of State; by means of which we are accounted to have certain privileges; entering, so to speak, only within the

sphere of Sanctification. It does not necessarily give us that moral and spiritual change of Nature or Character, by means of which we obtain the personal characteristics, the inward disposition and affections, which belong to Sanctification in its highest and most appropriated sense. Still, as compared with the state of those children who are not in this holy covenant, but who are yet in alienship from God, the Baptismal state is a sanctified one. We speak of Infant Sanctification, therefore, not merely as relative but as elemental; not so connected with Renewal and Conversion of heart, as to carry along with it any covenant promise of perpetuity and perseverance to the end; yet blessed with every hope that, if duly nursed by faithful instruction, it shall issue in that glorious grace. To this effect speaks St. Augustine: "We affirm therefore that the Holy Spirit dwells in baptized Infants, though they know it not; for after the same manner, they know Him not, though He be in them; as they know not their own soul, the reasoning faculty of which, though they cannot yet make use of it, is in them as a spark, dormant for the present, which will kindle as they grow in

years."[p] Chrysostom, in one of his Homilies, adds the same testimony: "For this cause we baptize Infants also, although they are not defiled with sin (actual); that there may be superadded to them Saintship, Righteousness, Adoption, Inheritance, a Brother Lord in Christ, and Incorporation into Him." And thus we are led to the next chapter.

[p] Quoted by Wall on "Infant Baptism." Vol. i., p. 278.

CHAPTER V.

INFANT INCORPORATION INTO CHRIST.

ST. PAUL told the Ephesian Christians that by nature both he and they were "children of wrath, even as others." (Eph. ii. 3.) To the Romans he wrote, saying,—"Are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin." (Rom. iii. 9.) Nor was this true only of the Adult world. By the doctrine of Original sin laid down in Romans v., it is clear that, apart from the reconciliation of the world through Christ, Infants as well as Adults are equally separated from God, all being by natural birth inheritors of the ruin in Adam. When Christ, therefore, came to redeem mankind, He stood as a second Adam in the room of the first; becoming the "Repairer of the breach, the Restorer of paths to dwell in" (Isa. lviii. 12); and He now stands related to the world for salvation, just as

Adam stands related to the world for ruin. Each is a federal head; the one over the kingdom of God, and the other over the kingdom of this world; the great difference between these two kingdoms being, that whereas all men are in the kingdom of the world by nature, it is only through grace that they are introduced into the kingdom of God. To the first we belong of necessity; because we are naturally incorporate in the old Adam. To the other, we must be brought instrumentally by becoming incorporate in Christ as a second Adam.

The questions we have to decide are (1), Can Infants thus be incorporated into Christ? And (2), If so, how is it instrumentally brought about?

In reply to the first of these questions, it is clear that Infants must be capable of such Incorporation; otherwise no deceased Infant could be saved. For salvation, even in an Infant, necessitates two things; viz., the remission of the Guilt and Condemnation due to original sin, and the removal of its hereditary taint or Infection; and neither of these can be effected without a transfer of state from the first to the second Adam, or in other words, without incorporation into Christ.

The reply to the second question is no less sim-

ple, if we only keep in view the truths which have been already proved in relation to Adults, and adapt them properly to the case of Infants.

As for Adults, it has been fully shown that three things are essentially required in their cases for a saving Incorporation or Ingrafting into Christ; viz., Repentance, Faith, and Baptism. Repentance and Faith are necessary instruments, by which the Holy Spirit imparts moral Renovation of heart to the sinner after a life of Actual sin. Baptism is the necessary instrument, by which the same blessed Spirit bestows upon the renewed sinner a covenant relationship of grace and mercy in Christ Jesus; assuring him thereby of his Acceptance, and conferring on him therein a variety of covenant Privileges. Neither of these two instrumentalities, however, can *alone* fully constitute that condition of soul which we understand by saving Incorporation into Christ. For while Baptism without inward Renovation would be imperfect, because a fundamental violation of the principle that holiness is necessary for heaven (Heb. xii. 14); inward Renovation without Baptism would be imperfect, because a no less complete violation of that cardinal law of the Gospel for Adults, which says,—

"Repent and be baptized for the remission of sins." (Acts ii. 39.) "Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins." (Acts xxii. 16.) "He that believeth AND is baptized shall be saved."[q] (Mark xvi. 16.)

How then is it, that Baptism makes an Infant incorporate into Jesus Christ? We have already shown that this Incorporation consists of two parts;

[q] If this statement be thought uncharitable towards the pious-hearted Quaker who altogether rejects Baptism, it can only be replied that we are here speaking of what is fully and Scripturally to be understood as saving Incorporation into Christ, which can never be altered to suit the prejudices of misguided men. Far be it from any theologian to sit avowedly in judgment on this sect, and say that none of its members can be saved. "God will have mercy on whom He will have mercy" (Rom. ix. 18); and will doubtless, save many men out of the visible covenant. We are not dealing now, however, with exceptional cases, but with the normal laws of Christianity.

The same remark applies to Infants dying unbaptized. There can be little doubt that the atonement was sufficiently universal to embrace the salvation of every dying Infant; and that, in all such cases, God has some method of His own, though unrevealed to us, by which He can incorporate those Infants into Christ. But that forms no proper part of His Covenant promises, and in no way comes under the recognition of the Church, or the established rules of Christianity. Speaking only of these, and dealing with the subject in general terms, we can never dissociate the principle of a saving Incorporation into Christ from the sacred ordinance of Baptism, whether the subject of it be an Adult or an Infant.

viz., (1) a reception of our souls by Christ into Himself, whereby, being no longer cut off from covenant privileges through the guilt and condemnation due to Original sin, we are taken into a state of favour before God for Christ's sake, and reckoned federally among the number of His children. (2) A reception of our souls by Christ into Himself, whereby we are not only reckoned federally among the number of His children, but become partakers of His renewing Spirit unto effective sanctification, and abide in Him unto everlasting life.

With reference to the *first* of these, every Infant lawfully baptized undoubtedly becomes incorporate into Christ; being made an individual member of a great federal body in Him. Such a spiritual transfer, however, involving as it does, no renewal of moral character, but only an altered relationship toward God, together with the conveyance of new covenant Privileges, does not require on the Infant's part any Repentance. How can it? For this transfer is not from a state of Actual sin into covenant mercy, but from a state of Original sin; and is scripturally effected through the Faith and Repentance of others, on the general principle laid

down in Part II. The Baptism of the Infant, therefore, so far corresponds with the Baptism of an Adult, and rightly carries along with it a reception of the soul by Christ into federal union with Himself; a federal union, however, which like that of branches ingrafted into the vine, may possibly be dissolved. (John xv. 2, 6.)

With reference to the *second* and higher sense of Incorporation into Christ (which the Church chiefly looks forward to, and which must ever be conjoined to the former, in order to represent the whole doctrine fully and scripturally), the question now occurs,—What has Infant Baptism to do instrumentally with it? Does Baptism bestow on the soul any necessary renovation of heart, or saving union with the life of Jesus Christ? Certainly not; otherwise every child baptized would be finally gathered into heaven. But does it on this account follow that all those children whose souls are afterwards truly renovated by the Spirit of God, and made full partakers of Christ in Nature as well as State, thus become abidingly Incorporated into Christ *apart* from the instrumentality of their Baptism? In no wise. For although the blessings of Infant Baptism may

be lost by unbelief, and worldliness, yet the gift it universally bestows (as we have shown on pages 193, 198), is one of proffered grace through the attendant working of the Holy Spirit. Hence if that gracious Spirit should lead a young heart to God from its earliest years, and give to it an abiding renovation of moral and spiritual character, this surely must be viewed as part of the covenant blessing of Baptism, and can never be separated instrumentally from it. Or if a rightly baptized Infant should grow up to man's estate, and be afterwards stained with all the vices of the world, against every warning voice of conscience and secret striving of the Spirit of God within him, and then at last should be truly converted and Incorporated through the Holy Spirit, by Repentance and Faith, into the Lord Jesus Christ, —although a great number of years may have intervened between that moment and his early Baptism,—yet he would be quite justified in looking back to that sacrament, with as much of thankfulness, as of remorse. His remorse would no doubt be great, because of the grievous violations of his youthful covenant; but his thankfulness would be fully as much so, on account of God's

undeserved grace in continuing faithful to that covenant against all his provocations and rebellion.

Speaking generally, therefore, of Infant Incorporation into Christ, we have a right to affirm, 1st,—That all Infants duly baptized, are universally Incorporated into Him as into a second Adam, and through Him derive the means of salvation, although they may not ultimately be saved. 2nd, —That some Infants, being duly baptized, are not only Incorporated into Christ by this federal union; but are also further united with Christ by a gradual renovating principle of divine life in the heart, which, appearing in childhood, is never afterwards lost. 3rd,—That other Infants, while thus Incorporated into Christ in the first sense by Baptism, may yet receive no Incorporation into Christ in the other sense, till they come to Repentance and Faith after a long course of sin; on the occurrence of which conversion, such persons may fairly look back to the covenant mercies of God and to the promised gift of His Holy Spirit in Baptism, as directly, although remotely, instrumental in completing their Incorporation.

If we are asked to distinguish between these three different forms of Infant Incorporation into

Christ, so as to point out which of them the Baptismal Service of our Church alludes to, we should say that it is *chiefly* in the direction of the second; inasmuch as the charity and love of the Church can never allow her to look upon those who profess to be true believers in any other light then as sincere. At the same time, knowing the possibility of insincerity or self-deception, her Offices are so constructed that every possible case is met by one or other of these three contingent meanings. Under the first, for example, notwithstanding the most discouraging circumstances of parental neglect, and youthful sin, a child would be quite correct in repeating these words of the Catechism,—"wherein I was made a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven." For we have before shown (in the corresponding section of Part I.) that these expressions scripturally belong to the *whole visible* Church by virtue of its federal union with Christ, and are not of necessity to be associated with final and persevering grace; that a "member of Christ," in this sense, may perish; that a "child of God," by this sort of relationship, may be rebellious and outcast; and that an "inheritor of the kingdom

of heaven," according to these general covenant promises, may be disinherited for ever. It is the fashion of Nonconformist writers to affirm that this use of terms is a lowering of the sense of Scripture. We reply that Scripture itself necessitates it; and that it is idle to force uniformly the highest spiritual meaning on these important terms against the mind of the Holy Spirit. In this respect, as in every other, the Church of England is true to her Bible. Nor need any of her most spiritually-minded sons ever be ashamed to follow her.

Many children, however, may repeat these words of the Church Catechism in their highest and noblest sense, as we have just observed the Church fondly hopes they do; and many more might so repeat them, if Christian parents and sponsors only rightly appreciated the full privileges of the Baptismal covenant, and worked with loving confidence upon the faithfulness of God to His gracious promises made in it. We shall speak more of this in a separate chapter hereafter. For the present, therefore, let it suffice us to remark that where truly renewing grace is communicated in early youth through the benediction of the Holy Spirit upon pious education, and believing prayer, Bap-

tism not only becomes the instrument by which the child is designated to be a member of Christ, and is made such by way of federal union with Him; but it is that instrument, to which nothing else on earth is antecedent, and by virtue of whose covenant promises the child afterwards becomes a personal partaker of the very life and nature of Jesus Christ. Let it be observed that it would be highly dangerous and unscriptural to put this forth as the *universal* effect of Infant Baptism; for that would lead to the very worst possible form of self-righteousness and self-deception. But this is no reason why pious parents should not ever hold it up before their minds as a gracious stimulant to believing prayer, and effort in the education of their families. Were they uniformly and consistently to do so, our conviction is that many more children would rise up hereafter to call their parents blessed.

CHAPTER VI.

INFANT NEW BIRTH.

It was shown in the first part of this treatise that the doctrine of New Birth was intimately connected with Adult Baptism; by which was meant that although a man's heart might be truly renewed by the Spirit of God before the administration of the Sacrament, yet his New Birth could never be considered complete until after Baptism had been received: that, in fact, two things were essential for the completed New Birth of an Adult; viz., first, a renewal of his moral nature by Repentance and Faith; and, secondly, a change of his spiritual relationship to God in Baptism.

In regard to children, however, the renewal of their moral nature by means of Repentance and Faith, is, during early Infancy, impossible.[r] Is there, then, any other means by which they may

[r] This is the teaching of St. Augustine.

be renewed independently? Certainly not: if we speak only of the ordinary operations of the Spirit of God. It is true, no doubt, that some few persons have had their whole moral nature effectually renewed and sanctified by the Holy Ghost, even from their mother's womb; as for example, Samuel, Jeremiah, or John the Baptist. But these instances of the Holy Spirit's operations are abnormal. They are too exceptional to be argued from, as illustrations of God's general dealings with His people. It follows, therefore, either that we must altogether deny the possibility of any one being ordinarily born again during a state of Infancy; or else, we must allow the New Birth of Infants to take place, without any necessary renewal of their moral nature, simply through their change of spiritual relationship to God in Baptism, by which they receive remission of the condemnation due to Original sin, and obtain the privileges and promises of Redemption.

Such was the view which the Church of Christ invariably held till the appearance of the Anabaptists at the Reformation, who expressly denied to Infants the right of Baptism, on the ground of their inability to bring forward any evidence of

their renewal of moral nature by Repentance and Faith. Against this novel opinion the whole Church of Christ alleged (as we have before shown), that, in the absence of this ability on the part of Infants, the Repentance and Faith of those who presented them to God in Baptism, perfectly justified the administration of the sacrament; while through such Baptism, those Infants were made, each and severally, federal members of the second Adam, and invested thereby with the promises and privileges of Redemption. Hence as far as the nature of the case would permit, every Infant thus rightly baptized was held to have been born again; not that its moral nature, as infected by the pollution of Original sin, was then renovated, except in the case of a dying Infant;[a] but that it then received the covenant influences of the Holy Spirit, and was put into a new state of Grace and Mercy before God, which was to all intents and purposes a Second Birth.

It has been objected to this view of the New Birth of Infants, that, inasmuch as a further renovation of their moral nature, over and above this primary change of their spiritual state, must

[a] See page 195.

always take place in after life before they can be saved, or regarded as in full and complete possession of the New Creation in Christ Jesus, it necessitates the doctrine of three births instead of only two; viz., Natural birth, Baptismal birth, and Renovation birth, which is not only confusing but unscriptural.

We reply that any necessary separation between the two last of these three is wholly gratuitous. The birth of an Infant's soul into a new state of spiritual Relationship and Privilege before God is intended, in God's great grace, to be the initiation of its entrance into a new state of moral Renovation also. Moreover it often is the case. M. Henry, as remarked already (p. 197), traced all his Renovation of heart to the moral influence of his Baptism. He remembered no period of his life in which he had not the love and fear of God; and he believed that the renewal of his moral nature had grown up along with his opening to mental consciousness and moral responsibility, under the blessed influences of divine grace, first received at his Baptism, and afterwards nurtured by pious education. This would, no doubt, far oftener be the case, if the gracious love of God towards His

faithful people were better understood, and His Covenant of Grace with them in Baptism more honoured and confided in.

Under these circumstances, then, who shall speak of Infants having two separate New births? Their birth by Baptism into a new spiritual State before God, is in this case, thoroughly inclusive of their birth into a new moral condition. Instead of these two things being separated, they ought to be regarded as parts of one great whole, which we hope to see coalesce afterwards when a sufficient time has been left for their proper development. In this respect they hold an exact analogy with the natural birth of our bodies, and the subsequent development of our mental and moral consciousness. When the body of a babe is born into a new state of existence, has its mind attained to any enlightened intelligence, or moral responsibility? No. For this you must allow time and education. In the case of an idiot, that time never comes; in some other cases it comes but slowly; in most cases, it follows however within certain reasonable limits. But whenever it comes, you always regard it in point of causation, as part and parcel of the original birth, fostered by subsequent nurture; not

as anything independently separate or new. You would never think of saying, for instance, that because there was an interval of time, more or less, between the birth of the body and the manifestation of its mental and moral consciousness, that therefore these were not coalescent parts of one great original. In like manner with Infant Baptism, which when rightly received, is our great original Second Birth. At that time the soul of an Infant is born into a new spiritual State before God, accompanied by gracious powers and influences of the Holy Ghost, which under pious and prayerful nurture are intended to produce a moral renovation of nature. The fact, therefore, that an interval of time, more or less, may take place, before any such moral renovation is effected, cannot separate this triumph of grace, when once effected, from the great original source whence it springs; viz., the covenant love of God which was made and sealed to us in Baptism. The more this analogy is regarded, the stricter will its truthfulness be seen. We have said that in Natural birth, there are three grades of persons who illustrate different intervals of time between their first appearance in the world and the expected develop-

ment of their mental and moral consciousness. With most persons the one gradually follows the other without any great interval of time, simply because care and education are bestowed by parents on their children in order to produce it. In other cases where all mental and moral education are neglected, it follows but very slowly. While in some cases where there is idiocy, no amount of culture will ever avail to develope it. It is just the same in regard to the various intervals of time which elapse between the Second birth of an Infant into a life of Christian privileges, and the development of its mental and moral renovation of character following from it. If there be deep piety in its parents, and sponsors, and if great faith, prayer, and pains be taken in its Christian nurture, there is then good ground for supposing that the grace of God will gradually produce renovation of moral character without any great interval of time. On the other hand, if pious education be neglected, and a child be allowed to grow up without any of that tender guidance, and those wise corrections which belong to holy nurture, what wonder if it be a long time before moral renovation is effected? With too many,

indeed, that time never comes. Though born again by Baptism into a life of new covenant promises and privileges, and destined apparently to obtain a full renovation of moral nature, every development of grace is stultified by the strength of self-will, and the power of indwelling evil. Sin embraced and clung to, against all the dictates of natural conscience, produces an enfeeblement of the moral powers, which like a kind of spiritual idiocy, hinders the growth in them of anything that is holy and good. They grow up, and live on, idly, listlessly, unprofitably, as if they had no understanding of their gracious privileges, and cared nothing for the judgment to come. The grace of God happily meets many in this condition and saves them; but we have reason to fear that many also remain in the obstinacy of unbelief. Such persons are, to use the words of St. Jude, "twice dead;"—dead by Original Sin, as having been born naturally; and dead in Reprobate Sin, after having been born again to the promises and privileges of the New Covenant life in Baptism.

Upon the whole, then, the New Birth of an Infant is only to be considered complete at the time of Baptism, so far as the nature of the case will

allow. It is a New Birth into blessings, privileges, and promises; an entrance into new relationship with God, accompanied by the communication of means for the moral renovation of the Infant's nature. The full development of this New Birth in such a manner may possibly never take place at all, as we have just now seen; in which case, we can only say with St. Paul, that the "grace of God has been received in vain." On the other hand, it may possibly take place in childhood by the speedy springing up of true Repentance and Faith, and by the exhibition of an early godly life; in which case the heart may be regarded as having been sanctified and renewed from the beginning. Or possibly, the New Birth of the Infant may not be truly completed until after the expiration of many years spent in worldliness and sin; in which case it can only be brought about by Repentance and Faith in Conversion. That Conversion, however, is not to be treated in the way in which Nonconformists are in the habit of treating it; viz., as the New Birth itself. On the contrary, it is only that necessary experience of the soul by which the New Birth of Infancy is completed in Adult life; and by which the past Baptism of childhood receives its essential

adult adjuncts of Repentance and Faith, and is brought into perfect harmony with the Baptism of those of riper years.

CHAPTER VII.

INFANT REGENERATION.

AFTER having gone through the preceding subjects, there will be little difficulty now in explaining this, the most contested and controverted of all. Almost every word indeed of the last chapter might well be transferred to the present one; as there is very little difference, except in name, between Regeneration and the New Birth. Both of them may be described as a change of spiritual state, by which those who are qualified for Baptism enter into a new relationship with God in that sacrament, and become thereby covenant partakers of the privileges of Redemption. Inasmuch, however, as this qualification for Baptism differs in the case of Adults and Infants, it follows that the aspect of Regeneration in the two cases must in some measure differ. For example, all unbaptized Adults who have lived in ignorance of God and in

violation of His holy laws, require a moral renovation of heart by Repentance and Faith, before they can be fit for Baptism; and they can therefore have no full and complete Regeneration, or admission to a life of new covenant privileges in Christ Jesus, even though baptized, without that previous renovation of moral nature. But with Infants the case is otherwise. For not having committed any actual sin, and being incapable of any moral renewal of nature by Repentance and Faith, they are admitted to Baptism on the Repentance and Faith of those who present them; by means of which their natural relationship to God becomes changed, and certain covenant operations of the Holy Ghost are bestowed upon them. This is the Regeneration of an Infant: as perfect in its nature as that belonging to an Adult, until the appearance of actual sin; but after that time, needing to be perfected by a moral change of nature, in order to give effect to the full covenant blessing of Baptism. When that moral change is by divine grace effected, whether in earlier or later life, then the Regeneration of the Infant passes into the full Regeneration of the Adult, and the soul is made a living and abiding member of Christ.

To enter at any greater length into this subject, either by way of argument or of illustration, would only be to occupy the attention of the reader in vain; for if he cannot agree with what has been already laid down, nothing that can be further stated will ever avail to convince him. It remains, therefore, that we now briefly show how the spiritual Regeneration of infants, when understood in this primitive and catholic sense, and not vaguely confounded with the doctrine of Conversion, exactly harmonizes both with the language of our Prayer-book, and with all the true principles of evangelical religion.

1st. As regards the *Prayer-book*. There is not a word to show throughout it that Infant Baptism is ever supposed to communicate a change of moral nature. The Service speaks of the baptized child as having been "regenerated by the Holy Spirit;" but in no other sense than that we have described. Sometimes we hear it said (*a*), That the phrases, "spiritual regeneration," and "regeneration by the Holy Spirit," are necessarily indicative of more than we have here defined them. But why? If the Holy Spirit be pleased to act as an invisible Agent in Baptism for the purpose of transferring

the soul of an Infant from a state of natural alienation into one of covenant relationship with God, is it not, strictly speaking, a "spiritual regeneration"? And if the Holy Spirit be pleased to accompany this, by associating Himself with the soul of that Infant, for the purpose of blessing its holy nurture, and of "leading it to repentance," thereby imparting to it means of salvation through the Grace of Acceptance and Privilege, is it not still more decidedly a "spiritual regeneration," albeit true renovation of heart and life yet remains to take place? This language of the Service is in no way equivocal or self-contradictory. It is alleged again (*b*), That the Service speaks of the Infant as having been made after Baptism, "a partaker of the death of Christ." But does this involve the renewal of the child's moral nature? Certainly not. It simply means, that the child has now become a partaker of the covenant privileges which result from atonement, so far as his age and necessities demand;—privileges, however, which, if the child live to an age of moral responsibility, will necessarily require subsequent Repentance and Faith before they can avail for salvation, but which Repentance and Faith at that

tender age are not, and cannot be required. This implies no supposition of any divine Renewal by means of which the heart of the child is brought into immediate conformity with the death of Christ in relation to sin, the world, and the devil. That is, indeed, prayed for; but it is viewed rather as an approaching and contingent blessing of Baptism, not necessarily as a concomitant one. Thus it is said,—"And humbly we beseech Thee to grant that he, being dead unto sin, and living unto righteousness, and being buried with Christ in His death, may crucify the old man, and utterly abolish the whole body of sin." This is a prayer for the future; not a statement of what is present. The next sentence states what is present in very different language,—"And that as he *is* made partaker of the death of Thy Son, he may also be partaker of His resurrection." This is an allusion to the child's spiritual regeneration in regard to State and Privilege. The other is an allusion to the child's renovation of moral nature; which though connected with, and flowing from the former, is nevertheless not granted there and then, and consequently must be looked for as something to come afterwards.

2nd. With reference to the *principles of exam-*

gelical religion. We ask, in what way is thi language antagonistic to them? Let us once mor define the doctrine of Regeneration as applie to Infants. Infant Regeneration, we say, is an ac of the Holy Spirit by which the soul of the bab is delivered from a state of alienship and condem nation before God under the curse of Original sir and is transferred into a state of grace and merc through Jesus Christ; by which it becomes a privileged partaker of all the blessings of Redemp tion, and receives the overshadowing influences c the Holy Spirit as a means for the renewal of it moral nature so soon as its moral faculties hav become developed and have been suitably nurture by Christian education.

There can be no doubt that those persons wh limit the principles of evangelical religion to par ticular Redemption and irresistible Grace, wil immediately denounce this doctrine as opposed t the Gospel of Christ. For that we are pre pared. As this, however, is not the place to argu whether the Redeemer died for all mankind, o whether His grace may be received in vain, w only remark that no doctrines are, in our judgmen more thoroughly established by the Word of God

or more strictly enjoined upon her children by the Services of the Church of England.

The appeal we now make is to others. This treatise has been chiefly written for the benefit of our fellow-churchmen. Its object has been to set forth the doctrine of Baptism, freed from that Nonconformist shadow which modern evangelical churchmanship among the laity has cast upon it; and to show that when all the theological terms which stand connected with it, are viewed in their primitive and truly Scriptural simplicity, there is nothing in any one of them which is at war with the faithful reception of the Gospel.

Are they opposed (*a*) to the doctrine of Justification by faith? In no way. An Infant which has been regenerated, incorporated into Christ, adopted, sanctified, and designated elect by Baptism, in the manner previously described, can never, on attaining to riper years, rest in these holy privileges for salvation without a Renewal of nature by Repentance and Faith. We do not deny, indeed, that Baptism may be rightly connected with Justification, apart from the faith of the Infant, supposing the child should die in Infancy before there was any possibility of Faith

being generated in its immature spirit. But in all other cases Baptism is one thing, and Justification is another. The latter is dependent only on Faith, "without the works of the law;" while the former adds nothing to it except the authority of the covenant ratification before God.

If these views of Baptism, however, are not opposed to the doctrine of Justification by Faith, do they not (*b*) hinder all plain and vigorous dealing with the conscience in reference to the necessity of Conversion? On the contrary, they lead to it. For they teach that all these covenant blessings of Infant Baptism are only of final avail for salvation when followed by Renewal of heart, or renovation of the moral nature. They are directly calculated, therefore, to impress the conscience with the most heart-searching questions; and they put it in the power of the preacher to urge these questions with considerable force. It may be said, "Has the Baptism of your childhood admitted you to the dignity and responsibility of being called members of Christ, and children of God? Have you been freed from the condemnation of Original Sin, and welcomed to the covenant grace of the Gospel by which every provision is offered you of obtaining

salvation through the atonement? Has the Holy Spirit undertaken to bless you by His loving operations, to strive with your consciences, and to lead you to repentance? How, then, do you receive these mercies? Are you walking worthy of such privileges? Have they led to the renewing of your hearts by true Repentance and Faith? What! Still unrenovated in moral nature? Still bound down by the love of the world, and the power of sin? In vain, then, are you called to this great state of salvation; in vain do you allege that you have been accepted by God in Baptism. The privileges and blessings thus conferred upon you will arise the more to condemn you, unless they end in your inward purification of heart, and lead to your true Conversion. Do not be deceived. Religion is not ceremonialism. The New Birth, when fully enjoyed, is not one of State or Privilege only; but of spiritual life and holy conversation also. "Whosoever is born of God overcometh the world." (1 John v. 4.) No longer harden your hearts, therefore, against these gracious movements of the Spirit by which you have so often been called to repentance; but, come, yield yourselves to God. Do not "receive the grace of God in vain." Do not tread

down the Son of God beneath your feet; nor "count the blood of the covenant wherewith you were sanctified an unholy thing." (Heb. x. 29.) Remember that God is still willing to welcome you; that He still stands pledged by the covenant of your youth to forgive you every sin, and bless you with the renewal of your nature. Flee to Him then, as foolish children who have rebelled against a Father's love. Do not trifle with His forbearance; lest you provoke Him to anger, and He sware in His wrath you "shall not enter into His rest." (Heb. iii. 11.) Do not forget your responsibilities. "God is not mocked: whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap: he that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." (Gal. vi. 8.)

May it not be said, however, that (*c*) these doctrines are opposed to the Sovereignty of divine grace? Do they not throw the sinner on his own strength, and lead him into the belief that the Renewal of his heart depends more on his own course of conduct, than on the simple work of the Holy Spirit? Certainly not more so than does holy Scripture, which always unites the language of God's sover-

eignty with that of man's responsibility. "Faith," it declares, is the "gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast." (Eph. ii. 8.) Yet our Lord throws the whole burden of not believing in Him on the wilful obstinacy of the human heart, saying, —"Ye *will not* come unto Me that ye might have life." (John v. 40.) Again, our Lord Jesus Christ is expressly said to have been exalted to "*give* repentance to Israel." (Acts v. 31.) Nevertheless, the Holy Spirit pleads with an impenitent Israelite in a manner which seems to throw the whole burden of his guilt upon his own sense of responsibility, saying,—"Despisest thou the riches of His goodness and forbearance and long-suffering; not knowing that the goodness of God *leadeth* thee to repentance? (Rom. ii. 4.) Numberless instances of the same kind might be adduced, in which Scripture represents the duty of seeking grace, notwithstanding it is free; of praying for true Repentance, notwithstanding it is a sovereign gift; of "working out salvation," although God works in us to will and to do of His own good pleasure; of "laying hold of eternal life," although predestination to life eternal is (to use the words of our own Article), "decreed by God's counsel secret to us,

before the foundations of the world were laid." In a word, man is everywhere treated as a responsible being, who is capable either of receiving or resisting the grace of God, and is to be dealt with accordingly.

But this view of Baptism, it may be said (*d*), destroys the faithfulness of God to His covenant; inasmuch as it allows of thousands to fall away from it. This accusation is transparently fallacious. Is there no difference in Scripture between a covenant of federal Privileges which is conditional, and a covenant of actual Gift which is absolute? The faithfulness of God to the first of these demands no more than the steady exhibition of that divine grace and mercy which are promised in it, and from which multitudes may fall away like withered branches from the Vine. (John xv. 6.) The faithfulness of God to the second goes much further; requiring that the gift once fully bestowed should be "without repentance," and that those who are the subjects of it should never be forsaken and deserted, but abide like branches in the Vine, with all faithfulness to the end. (John xv. 5.) If this be the distinction of Scripture, it has certainly been sustained in the preceding pages; for nothing

has been more clearly kept in view throughout the whole treatise, than the fact that while Regeneration or New Birth, Adoption or Sanctification, or Incorporation into Christ may all be lost, when viewed only as a covenant of federal Privileges they become absolute, irreversible, indefectible, when by an inward Renewal of Nature that covenant has expanded into one of actual and personal Gift. No one, therefore, can fairly say that the doctrine of Baptism here propounded impeaches the character of the divine faithfulness.

What else does it impeach? In what other way may it be attacked as inconsistent with evangelical religion? It is impossible to answer for the outcries either of ignorance or prejudice. Nor can anyone ever expect to be safe from unjust imputations, if the critics and the criticized are not first agreed about the meaning of theological terms. Among those who refuse to see in the terms here discussed any but the highest spiritual meaning, there will necessarily be disappointment and disagreement. Let it be so. True evangelical religion does not arrogate to itself this excessive and unbending spirituality of theological definitions. It is content to take Scripture simply as it stands,

and honestly to recognize in the covenant grace of God, all those distinctions everywhere apparent between what is general and particular, conditional and absolute, defectible and eternal. Such is the basis of this book.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE RESPONSIBILITIES AND BLESSINGS OF CHRISTIAN PARENTS IN REFERENCE TO THE EDUCATION OF THEIR BAPTIZED CHILDREN.

THE importance of a right use of the doctrine of Baptism by Christian parents and sponsors cannot be over-rated. According to that singular sacramental theory, which was first invented in Switzerland at the Reformation, and still exists in England among all our Nonconformists, not to say among a large number of dubious-minded churchmen also, Baptism is little else than a naked sign of Christian profession between man and man, being accompanied by no living power to bless the soul which receives it. Children who are thus brought to God are simply dedicated to Him. No kind of relationship ensues betweem them, through which these children as they grow up, may look to God in Christ as a covenant Father, or feel themselves

privileged partakers of the guidance and teaching of the Holy Ghost. On the contrary, they are practically treated as out of the covenant, and as aliens from heaven. Such children, however young, are told to ask for the Holy Spirit, just as if He were at a distance from them: they are urged to flee into the arms of their Saviour from the divine wrath, just as if they had no manner of present relationship with Him. In a word, they are addressed in exactly the same sort of terms which missionaries use to the heathen: the covenant which God made with them at their Infant Baptism being treated as null and void, or at all events as not worth more than the paper on which the Baptism was registered in the church or chapel vestry.

It is not our intention to analyze the value of these instructions, or to estimate their general effect on the minds and consciences of young people; because without doubt, they are occasionally over-ruled for good, and issue to some extent, in the production of early piety. But this is a proof only of the sovereign grace of God, who so often gains glory to Himself out of means which are imperfect and defective. Could the annals of early piety be unfolded from the beginning of Christian-

ity it would be found that ordinarily God blessed a very different method of parental instruction; a method which is more in harmony with His own appointed ordinances, and which rests with more loving trust on His covenant faithfulness; a method which we now press with all earnestness and affection on every Christian parent and sponsor as being alone truly Scriptural and consolatory, and which by God's blessing, is far more likely to produce a godly generation among our rising youth than any other.

We are speaking, be it remembered, of those parents and sponsors only who are themselves faithful believers; who, when they presented their children to God in Baptism, did so in firm and prayerful confidence that they were engaged in a solemn reality, and that while they were offering them to their heavenly Father in loving faith, He was sincerely receiving them into the arms of His covenant mercy, and engaging to bless them with His gracious Spirit. Under such circumstances, what are their duties and encouragements?

Their first duty is, obviously, to educate these dear children in the same holy confidence; to remind them, as they grow up, and become capable

of understanding the subject, that they are not like heathen children, without any covenant mercies and promises, but blessed with the loving smile of a Father who is ready to hear all their prayers, and take full possession of their hearts by the indwelling of His Holy Spirit. Instead of telling them that God is estranged from them, and angry with them on account of the natural depravity of their hearts, it is the great duty of these instructors to assure their children of His full reconciliation toward them in Jesus Christ, the assurance of which has been already signed and sealed to them at their Baptism; that as regards the punishment due to the curse of Original sin, it has been all forgiven and put away; and that now they have only to yield their hearts to God, repenting of their actual sins, and trusting with simple faith in the atonement of their dear Saviour for justification unto life eternal. It is not, of course, intended that these exact words are to be addressed to little children; but that sentiments like these, broken up into thoughts and sentences suited to their capacities, should be gently and wisely instilled into their minds, for the purpose of gradually attracting them toward the love and ser-

vice of God. They should be accustomed to look on their heavenly Father, as one who has already admitted them into the relationship of Adoption, and will therefore never turn away from their prayers. They should be taught to look on Jesus, as one who has already taken them in His arms and blessed them, and will therefore never refuse to pray for them. They should be taught to look on the Holy Spirit, as one who has already pledged Himself to teach and purify their souls, and will therefore always prompt them to do what is good, and be grieved when they do what is wrong. At the same time, no part of evangelical education can be more important, than a clear statement that none of these privileges of grace are to be rested upon as enough of themselves for salvation. On the contrary, it should be distinctly shown that the heart of every child is, by nature, "dead in trespasses and sins;" and that all these covenant blessings of Baptism are intended for the gradual awakening of children to a sense of those sins, and for their Renewal unto active holiness; and that under these circumstances, it is quite possible for children to be so obstinate and wicked, as wilfully to remain in spiritual blindness, and to continue

unrenewed in their moral nature; and that if it be so, their responsibilities and dangers then become all the greater, because they reject the grace which is given them, and "count the blood wherewith they were sanctified an unholy thing."

Meanwhile, what are the encouragements of those who labour with faith and prayer in this course of simple elementary instruction? Much every way, if their own example and conversation correspond therewith, inasmuch as they know that while holy effort is thus going on upon their part, the gracious operations of the Spirit of God are accompanying them. The covenant of Baptism is not nugatory. A child, regenerated as to spiritual state, has the promise, under all this faithful nurture, of being renewed also as to moral nature. It is true this cannot be claimed as a matter of necessity; for we are "not born of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." (John i.) Nevertheless it may be confidently looked for as a matter of grace; for we are "born again not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." (1 Pet. i. 23.) Hence, as faith keeps dropping these holy seeds of life from the Word of God into children's

hearts, and the Spirit mercifully applies them to their consciences, there is every encouragement for believing that they will sooner or later produce in them a true moral Renovation. The more so, because there are many distinct intimations in Scripture, that the promises of grace and mercy peculiarly belong to the children of believing parents who thus honour the divine faithfulness, and repose with confidence in the covenant.

Why, then, it may be asked, are so many pious parents disappointed by the irreligious lives of their children? This is a painful question, and one that must be answered very tenderly. "Speaking the truth in love," however, we are bound to say that in almost every such case, if the history of it could be thoroughly analyzed, there has either been inconsistency of character on the part of one or other of the parents, nullifying or deteriorating the effect of these educational principles; or else there has been total negligence in carrying out this Christian nurture, and a lack of that earnest, realizing trust in God's faithfulness to His promises which is so essential to the fulfilment of the covenant. It needs no other explanation than this to account for all the miserable departures from piety,

which so often mark the history of families in the Church of God. It is for this reason, indeed, that we note it; in the hope that many Christian parents who read the present pages, may be induced to lay it well to heart, and proceed henceforth upon the more scriptural plan here enforced. Let them have their children's Baptism distinctly in view, while they are carrying on their religious instruction; let it be practically referred to as a covenant of grace and responsibility; let their children be reminded of their privileges, and be taught to look back upon the time when they were thus presented to God, as to a solemn season when God received them for Christ's sake to Himself, and pledged Himself to be their Father and Friend. It is written,—"He will ever be mindful of His covenant." (Psalm cxi. 5.) Why should we doubt it? Let His promises be pleaded, therefore, in prayer. Let children be taught from their earliest years to look upon Him as one who loves them, and is pleased to give them grace day by day. Through such means they will, humanly speaking, be drawn with trustful confidence to the footstool of their Father's throne, and be brought to rest on the words of Jesus as of one who delights to be

their Saviour. These are the first buddings of true Repentance and Faith. Let them be watched, and fostered. As sin breaks forth from time to time, and inward depravity asserts itself, we must not be discouraged and suppose that this teaching is in vain in the Lord. The conflict between the "flesh and the spirit" which are always so contrary to each other, must of course be expected in the young as well as the old. At such times, therefore, children are not to be irritated and discouraged, but kindly brought to the mercy-seat, and reminded that Jesus is an Advocate who can obtain their pardon, and that the Holy Spirit is a Comforter who can give them victory over their evil tempers. Through tender nurture like this, accompanied by personal consistency of character on the part of faithful parents, we may have every hope that the good work of moral Renovation will gradually go on in the hearts of our children, and in the end bring forth life eternal. The misfortune is that many of the very best of parents forget these principles. Although they bring their little ones to the font for Baptism, they scarcely ever allude to the fact afterwards. They never make it any vital element in the character of their religious education. Practi-

cally, they ignore it; treating it just as if it had no moral bearing on the spiritual welfare of their offspring, and as if God Himself cared nothing at all about it. If these few words of explanation and admonition induce any members of the Church of England, who, from fear of exalting Baptism too highly, or from any inconsiderate misunderstanding of our Church Service, have been hitherto too reluctant to give it any prominence in the education of their children,—if these words of counsel shall induce them to alter their line of teaching and lead them to treat the Baptism of their children as an actual reality, which God will honour and act upon when His divine faithfulness is lovingly trusted, the labour of writing the preceding pages will have been abundantly compensated.

These principles, be it remembered, moreover, are exactly those of our revered Reformers. They represent the actual methods by which the men who compiled our Prayer-book, and who laid down their lives for the truth of the Gospel against Popish errors, trained their own families, and enforced the system of Christian education. Bishop Jewel, for instance, when writing on Confirmation, says,—"Therefore a father must teach his child

what God is; that He is our Father, that He hath made us, and doth feed us, and giveth us all things needful both for soul and body; that He is our Lord, and therefore we must serve Him, and obey Him, and do nothing whereby He may be displeased; that He is our Judge, and shall come to judge the quick and the dead, and that all men shall come before Him, to receive according as they have done in the flesh. He must put his child in mind of his Baptism, and teach him that it is a covenant of God's mercy to us, and of our duty to God; that it is a mystery of our salvation, that our soul is so washed with the blood of Christ as the water of Baptism washeth our body." Again: "Let us look upon our children as upon the great blessings of God. They are the Lord's vessels, ordained to honour; let us keep them clean. They are Christ's lambs and sheep of His flock; let us lead them forth into holy pasture. They are the seed-plot of heaven; let us water them, that God may give the increase. Their angels do always behold the face of God; let us not offend them. They are the temples and tabernacles of the Holy Ghost; let us not suffer the foul spirit to possess them and dwell within them."

CHAPTER IX.

THE TRUE NATURE OF SPONSORSHIP.

ALLUSION has been so frequently made to Sponsorship, and the popular mistake which exists in regard to it is so extremely mischievous, that a few words respecting its real nature may possibly prove of value.

Many sincere churchmen are to be found, who, from total ignorance of the subject, not only give great and just occasion to the enemies of the Church of England for their inveterate hostility to Sponsorship, but to some extent become weakened themselves in their attachment to this ancient institution. Interpreting one of the answers of the Catechism in a manner which was never intended by its compilers, these persons invariably assume that the doctrine of Sponsorship pledges every Godfather and Godmother to the true Repentance and Faith of all those Infants for whom they

stand sureties; that, in fact, they promise and vow in their Godchildren's names something which it is impossible they can ever be sure of fulfilling; and that, therefore, they are guilty before God of great presumption, burdening themselves with a responsibility which is more of a sin than a duty, because violating one of the first laws of their moral conscientiousness.

If this were true, it must be owned that it would be a serious impeachment. For notwithstanding all which has just been said respecting the faithfulness of God in blessing the instruction of pious parents and sponsors, no one can possibly be justified in promising the absolute fulfilment of this hope in the case of every child baptized, inasmuch as he can never forsee the extent which contingent or exceptional circumstances may have in either stopping or spoiling the course of that instruction. But the truth is, Sponsorship implies no promise of that sort; and those who mantain such a statement either wilfully misrepresent the case, or unintentionally deceive themselves respecting it. We must candidly allow, indeed, that the language employed in the second answer of the Catechism is superficially open to this interpretation; and

therefore we cannot wonder that the enemies of our Church should take advantage of it. The question is,—"What did your Godfathers and Godmothers then for you?" To which the reply is given,—"They did promise and vow three things in my name; first, that I should renounce the devil and all his works, the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh; secondly, that I should believe all the articles of the Christian faith; and thirdly, that I should keep God's holy will and commandments all the days of my life." It may be asked,—"What words can be plainer than these? What casuistry can possibly prevent them from teaching, that all Sponsors pledge themselves to the future Repentance haith, and Obedience of their Godchildren?" We reply,—The casuistry of simple truth prevents it; and the testimony of actual fact renders it an impossibility. It is clear that the only proper way of testing what Sponsors do at the Baptism of Infants, is to look to the questions put to them during the Service, and to note the answers which they return; for, by whatever form of speech the case may be represented in other places, it is obvious that these formal statements can alone be

regarded as expressing the actual contract which is then entered into. Following this simple course, then, what do we find? Why so far from Sponsors being called upon by the Church to promise the future Repentance and Faith of their Godchildren, the subject is never named to them; nor are they so much as even asked a single question about these children! The theory upon which the Church proceeds in the Baptism of Infants is quite of a different kind; not being based on unreasonable and dubious promises of the future Repentance of the Infant, but on the vicarious protestation of the Sponsor's own Repentance and Faith; the ground of the Baptism being that the Lord in His overflowing grace is then willing to welcome the Infant into His Church, and bestow upon it the blessings of the covenant. It is quite true that this protestation which the Sponsors make of their own Repentance and Faith is made in the name of the Infant, and that it is intended to be of a representative or substitutionary character; nevertheless, it is the record of a present and actual state of things, not the promise or vow of anything which is thereby pledged to be afterwards fulfilled by the child. It is not said, for example,—"Dost thou in the

name of this child promise and vow that *he* shall renounce the devil and all his works," etc.? Had the question been worded thus, it would have justified every calumniation which our enemies have brought against the subject. But, on the contrary, it is said,—"Dost *thou*, in the name of this child, renounce the devil and all his works so that *thou* wilt not follow nor be led by them?" In other words, Sponsors do not undertake that the *Infant* baptized shall hereafter renounce the devil and all his works; but they promise and vow before the Church that they *themselves* actually do, and will continue afterwards, to renounce the devil and his works, and that in the child's name; the object of this transaction simply being, to provide a confession of true Repentance and Faith at the time of the Infant's Baptism over and above the presumed Faith of its parents; first, as an additional security for its godly education, and secondly, in order to render the administration of the sacrament more technically conformable to its administration among Adults, where the presence of Faith and Repentance are fundamentally demanded as necessary pre-requisites. The Service, therefore, does not go on saying,—"Dost thou

promise that this *child* shall believe in God the Father Almighty, and in Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord," etc.? It asks—"Dost *thou* believe in God the Father Almighty, and in Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord," etc.? These representative qualifications of the Sponsors are, indeed, so thoroughly supposed to be the actual qualifications of the Infant, that for the moment the two parties are reckoned as one; the Sponsors being addressed in the singular number just as if they bodily impersonated the child, and asked the following significant question,—"Wilt *thou* be baptized in this faith?" It is not said,—"Wilt thou in the name of this child promise that, if he be baptized, *he* shall have true Faith when he comes to an age of discretion?" Such a question would be not only too uncertain to admit of any reasonable answer; but it would in no way further the object for which the office of Sponsorship was designed, viz., as the presentation of a living Faith on behalf of Infants for the purpose of justifying their admission into the covenant.

Let it be clearly understood, then, that the promises and vows made by Godfathers and Godmothers in the names of their Godchildren involve

no pledge of the future Repentance and Faith of those children, but are purely and properly personal to themselves; being the presentation of their own Repentance, Faith, and Obedience, which are thus pledged, and promised to God as an expression of the piety with which those children are brought to be baptized, and on the basis of which they are welcomed into the holy covenant.

But how, it will be asked, can you reconcile this with the language used in the Catechism? Nothing is easier. For although the Sponsor's vows be purely personal, being merely a protestation that they do actually then renounce the devil, and that they will continue to do so, yet they are made for the edification and instruction of their Godchildren, and are intended to represent the obligation of those children to do exactly the same, so soon as they come to years of discretion. When a baptized child therefore repeats these words,—"They did promise and vow three things in my name; first, that I should renounce the devil and all his works," etc., he simply means to say,—"They did promise and vow three things in my name; (representing thereby) first, that I renounce the devil and all his works," etc. This explanation

ought to be very plainly taught the children; for the purpose of bringing out a full sense of their own responsibilities, and of showing them that their sponsors' vows are practically intended to be their own. In proof of which the Catechism asks in another place,—"Why, then, are Infants baptized when by reason of their tender age they cannot perform them?" To which the answer is given, —"Because they promise them both (*i.e.*, both the vow of Repentance and of Faith) by their sureties; which promise, when they come to age, themselves are bound to perform." That is to say, their Sponsors promised and vowed their own Repentance and Faith, as representative pledges of the two needful constituents of Baptism, in order that their Godchildren might be consistently received into the covenant of God. And by thus having been received into the covenant, these children themselves became subject to the *same* promises and vows. Hence, when the Church Catechism speaks of all Sponsors promising and vowing in the name of their Godchildren that they "should renounce the devil and his works," it simply means, as we have before stated, that they entail upon those children an obligation on their own part to

do exactly the same thing hereafter. There is no difficulty about it; nor is any casuistry required to explain it. We have only thus to compare the Service with the Catechism in order to show how mistaken those are who imagine Sponsors to make moral contracts which they cannot perform. The truth is, they make no contract, and offer no surety for the future state of their Godchildren. It is from first to last a *personal* contract and suretyship; it merely consists in the protestation or presentation of their own Repentance and Faith, in lieu of that which Infants cannot have, because of the tenderness of their years; the groundwork of this vicarious or representative faith as a title for their admission into the covenant being based on a separate line of argument, which has been before adverted to on pages 156—160.

Under these circumstances, the grand question which every Sponsor has to settle is simply his own possession of true Repentance and Faith; for he has no right to make a solemn protestation of those things in his Godchild's name, unless he can conscientiously believe that he enjoys them in his own soul. Upon this point every Sponsor has abundant cause for serious self-examination, and

his burden of responsibility is very great. But he has no more need to hold himself personally responsible for the future piety of his Godchild, than he has to hold himself responsible for the next day's sunrise. He is bound, indeed, to pray for, and aid in the pious education of the child; but should every pious effort fail, he has not the slightest necessity for reproaching himself with having made a pledge that has been broken, or a promise that has been unfulfilled.

It may be objected however that this principle of Sponsorship is not found anywhere in Scripture. Not by name, we fully allow. Yet in reality it is so. For if Isaac was circumcised on the Faith of his father Abraham, what was this but parental suretyship for the purpose of introducing a child into covenant mercies which otherwise he could not have enjoyed? As a matter of principle, rather than of order and expediency, it matters not who the Sponsors be, provided they professedly represent a true suretyship of Faith, through which, the Lord, out of love toward His people, consents to receive their seed into His visible covenant of grace. The exact *words* Sponsorship, and Suretyship, as applied either to Circumcision or Baptism,

are not to be found in Scripture, we allow. But things are older than names; and if we carefully analyze the ground of Infant covenantship with God, we shall find that these things are, in some shape or other, either expressed or silently understood, altogether inseparable from it. Thus the Israelites, as described in Deut. xxix., made a covenant with God, not only for themselves, but also for their "little ones." Indeed it was made not only with them which were present, but also with their posterity. "Keep the words of this covenant," saith God, "and do them, that ye may prosper in all that ye do. Ye stand this day, *all of you*, before the Lord your God; your captains of your tribes, your elders and your officers, with all the men of Israel, your *little ones*, your wives, and the stranger that is in thy camp, that *thou shouldest enter into covenant* with the Lord thy God, and *into His oath* which the Lord thy God *maketh with thee this day*," etc., (verses 9—15). From which passage it is clear that the parents or guardians of little children entered into covenant with God on their behalf, on the principle of vicarious faith.

Should this statement of the subject clear away doubts from the minds of any members of the

Church, who have hitherto felt scruples upon the subject of Sponsorship, let us hope that all such persons will come forward more and more manfully to support the Church of England against her opponents, in these days of wide spread disaffection to her Liturgy. It may be predicated with certainty that the more her Liturgy is studied the more surely will its scriptural fulness be ascertained. And among all points vainly assailed by her enemies, none stands freer from objection, when properly understood, than the doctrine of Sponsorship in Infant Baptism.

Indeed the Nonconformists themselves in olden times, did not quarrel with the Church of England about Sponsorship on general principles, so much as on its particular exclusion of parents, and this point has now been yielded. They excepted to the exclusion of parents from being sureties for the education of their own children. "But if parents were dead, or in a distant country, they were as much for Sponsors who should undertake for the education of the child, as their adversaries."[t] The "Overtures of the General Assembly"

[t] Neal's "History of the Puritans." Vol. i. Appendix H.

concerning Discipline in 1706, maintain the same position. In the first and second clauses of the fourth head of that document, we find the following:—1st: "Children born within the verge of the visible Church, of parents one or both professing the Christian religion, have a right to Baptism. 2nd: It being the duty of Christian parents to devote their children to God by Baptism, and to covenant for their education in the faith of Christ, no other Sponsor is to be taken, unless the parents be dead or absent, or grossly ignorant or under scandal not removed; such being unfit to stand for Sponsors in transacting a solemn covenant with God: in which cases the parent is required to provide some fit person, and if it can be, one related as a parent to the child should be sponsor."[u] Thus, the wholesale objection to Sponsorship which modern Nonconformity puts forth, and by which the very idea of one person standing before God as representative or security for a child in the transaction of this solemn covenant is ridiculed and abused, seems to have found no place in the creed of their fathers. The fact need not be dwelt

[u] Quoted from "Baptism and Baptismal Regeneration," by the Rev. A. Boyd. P. 128.

upon. It is merely mentioned here, in order to show how altered the present system of Dissent is in this, as in some other particulars, from what it used to be one or two centuries ago.

CHAPTER X.

THE RELATION BETWEEN CONFIRMATION AND INFANT BAPTISM.

In the early ages of Christianity, when the Apostles baptized their first converts from Judaism or heathenism, they necessarily had to wait some time before they could fully ascertain the steadfastness of the profession of such converts in the midst of cruel tyranny and persecution. Doubtless there were some like Simon Magus, who deceived themselves with false impressions of Christianity, and who, after a short trial of its profession, wavered in their adherence to it, even if they did not openly apostatize. It appears, therefore, to have been a custom of the Apostles, after certain intervals of time, to revisit the infant Churches which they had planted, with the view of looking after their converts, of cheering and encouraging them in their arduous service of the Cross, and of estab-

lishing them more firmly in the faith of Christ. On such occasions the Apostles laid their hands upon the heads of all those who remained faithful, and communicated to them fresh spiritual gifts (Acts viii. 14—17, Acts xiv. 21, 22); on which account they were said to have gone about "confirming the Churches." (Acts xv. 41.)

After the Apostolic age, as the Churches grew, and the number of Infant Baptisms proportionately advanced, this custom of looking after the spiritual interests of the baptized, of examining into their Christian steadfastness, and of confirming them in the faith through laying on of hands, was continued by the bishops of the Christian Church in reference to its youthful members. That is to say, upon their attaining the age of responsibility, children were examined both as to doctrine and practice, and were called upon to declare with their own lips the solemn vows of Repentance and Faith, which were so necessary for an enjoyment of the full blessings of their previous Baptism; after which the bishops laid their hands upon their heads, and invoked the special grace of God upon them.

Unhappily the same spirit of superstitious ven-

eration for the Eucharist which led many of the ancient Churches to give the Lord's Supper to Infants, necessitated for consistency's sake, the administration of Confirmation to Infants also; by which means this original object of Confirmation was for a time lost sight of. But as the utter senselessness of these customs gradually forced itself on the conviction of the Churches, they became abandoned; after which Confirmation reverted to its primitive usage, being regarded as an act, by which children voluntarily ratified in their own persons, all the vows and promises of Baptism previously made in their names by their sponsors, and received from God, in answer to their confession of Faith, a corresponding increase of grace.

Such was the origin of Confirmation; an institution which, although in our own country it has often been treated as a mere matter of form, and has thus been brought into the greatest disrepute among Dissenters, is nevertheless, one of the most solemn and important of Church ordinances; coming as it does, before the youthful mind at a time when, if rightly directed, it is most peculiarly open to sacred impressions, and when the influence of a pious education by faithful parents and sponsors

may be supposed to have prepared it for still further training in spiritual thought and feeling by the Christian pastor. Preparation for Confirmation, indeed, when thus spiritually pursued, often becomes a season of the most inestimable blessing; quickening consciences into greater activity, strengthening hearts to do better battle against the world, the flesh, and the devil, and establishing souls in the hope of being more truly living and abiding members of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The object of this chapter however, is not so much to enforce the advantages of Confirmation, as to explain its relation to Baptism, and to show especially how it stands related to the doctrine of Infant Baptism.

The case with regard to Adults has been sufficiently explained already. With regard to children, for whom the Church of England Service is especially intended, the circumstances connected with this ordinance are extremely interesting and important.

Let it be remembered, in the first place, that when Infant Baptism is administered, the Infant is presented to God through the Faith of parents and sponsors. At that time the Infant is alike

unconscious of the privileges and responsibilities which attend this sacrament. Meanwhile those who present the Infant for Baptism are carefully instructed by the Church, to remember that it is their part and duty to impress upon the child a due sense of those privileges and responsibilities so soon as his moral and mental capacities will properly allow of it. Hence with charitable hope, and loving confidence, that by God's blessing the Infant will in due time profit by these instructions, and be led at last to acknowledge their power personally, the Church patiently awaits the period when, in maturer years, he will come forward of his own free will, confessing that he prizes these privileges, acknowledging his obligation to these responsibilites, and confirming them all at God's altar by a solemn declaration of his own Repentance and Faith. Confirmation is thus an ecclesiastical rite which supplements Infant Baptism in reference to those very points by which it is separated from Adult Baptism; bringing up the Christian experience of those who are the subjects of it into the condition of Adult converts who are in full communion with the Church of Christ.

Does any young disciple, then, ask specifically what is the exact position in which he will be placed by Confirmation, different from that in which he has already been placed by Infant Baptism? We reply that sacramentally his position remains perfectly unaltered; the promises of the sacramental covenant can never be changed by any subsequent ordinance. This ecclesiastical rite introduces nothing which is really new; it only expresses an open Confirmation of that which has previously existed under other conditions. On God's side, for example, the covenant promise of forgiveness of sins was made to the Infant at Baptism, without any accompanying requirement of its renovation of heart, which promise was only then fulfilled so far as Original sin was concerned. Its fulfilment, indeed, in any other sense was impossible, by reason of the tender years of the Infant. The moment, therefore, that a clear sense of moral responsibility induces in that child any serious feeling of Repentance, and of Faith in Christ as a Saviour, from that moment the covenant promise of forgiveness in Baptism, while still remaining what it had been before, becomes altered in regard to its conditions; being no longer allied

to the irresponsible condition of Infancy, but to the growing and advancing responsibility of Adult years. Consequently at the season of Confirmation, when an Infant, now grown to years of discretion, makes a distinct declaration of this sense of moral responsibility, and a corresponding confession of true Repentance and Faith, the vows of Baptism which had been previously registered in his name by sponsors, become openly ratified and confirmed by himself; while the promise of forgiveness, on the other hand, which had been before only made to him as to an irresponsible babe, are now formally confirmed to him as a penitent and believing Adult. Thus nothing new is added to Baptism. It is simply a Confirmation or ratification of its blessed provisions answerable to the altered conditions under which the soul which was once baptized as an Infant now finds itself placed by reason of its advanced years. A pious youth can no longer remain content to stand in the Covenant, merely because he had been brought into it by his parents and sponsors as a babe. For that inestimable blessing, indeed, he feels truly thankful. At the same time he now realizes the importance of a public profession of religion on

his own account; and, therefore, desiring to consecrate himself openly to the divine service, he dedicates himself to God in Confirmation as a token that he is not in the covenant under constraint, but of his own free act and will. It thus becomes virtually a proof of his steadfastness, an evidence that he was not baptized into Christ in vain, and that he now professes to have a full enjoyment of all those covenant blessings which belong to the faithful recipients of Adult Baptism.

In putting the case thus, it is of course assumed that all those who are presented to the bishop for Confirmation, have been truly led by God's Spirit to make this solemn dedication of themselves to their Redeemer. And this the Church of England supposes in her appointed form of Service. On no account could she construct a service which was designed for hypocrites. In this, as in all other cases, she presumes that those who make solemn professions of Repentance and Faith mean what they say; and leaving the responsibility of self-deception with themselves, she charitably welcomes them as true believers in Christ. We are far from saying that all candidates for Confirmation come up to this spiritual standard. On the contrary, we

believe that in very many cases they fall miserably short of it. Sometimes it happens that those pastors who prepare their candidates for this sacred rite, do so under very faint impressions of its deep spiritual obligations; making it to be more a repetition lesson of the Church Catechism, and a questioning from the Articles on Church doctrine, than an experimental inquiry as to whether the hearts of the young people are rightly affected toward God, and whether they desire to consecrate themselves to the Lord's service with all their heart and soul, and strength. At other times, even after the greatest care in these respects, after a pastor has explained, for instance, in the most solemn manner possible, all the privileges of Confirmation on the one hand, and the awful responsibility of trifling with it on the other; after having done everything in his power to make the formalist and the hypocrite draw back, he may have to present some for this ordinance who have no true renovation of heart. In that case, however, there is no fault to be attributed either to the pastor who presents them for Confirmation, or to the Church who receives them; for where, after all these diligent pains have been taken, they still persist in

asserting spiritual motives, declaring that they feel conscious of a renovation of their inward life, and that they truly desire to dedicate their lives to the Lord, it would be uncharitably presumptuous and unjustifiably dictatorial in their pastor to disbelieve them. He may have doubts about their sincerity, or fears of their self-deception; but those doubts and fears may, possibly, be wrong. Hence without the most palpable evidence of their correctness, he has no right to reject such debateable candidates. It not unfrequently happens, however, that those who thus appear very questionable at the beginning of their preparation for Confirmation, become solemnized under the weighty admonitions of their pastor. When the doctrine of Baptism is explained, the object of Confirmation enforced, and the vow of Repentance and Faith urged with power on the consciences of the candidates, those who first offered themselves for the rite in utter thoughtlessness frequently become concerned about religion in a manner they never were before; they are awakened to new spiritual interests, and look upon the proposed ordinance under totally new aspects. In fact, that brief period of time is constantly the turning point of young hearts; numbers

being thus led by the grace of God to forsake the love of the world, and yield themselves to Christ. It may suit the doctrinal tenets of Dissent to hold up this ordinance to ridicule; but wherever it is attended to in the manner now pointed out, nothing can be more remote from criticism, nor can any ecclesiastical custom be more full of spiritual blessing. Even Calvin himself allowed that it was of apostolical institution.[v]

[v] Calvin, on Heb. vi. 3.

CHAPTER XI.

THE PRACTICAL VALUE OF BAPTISM IN THE EXPERIENCE OF A BELIEVER.

It may naturally be asked whether, after a Christian has received this sacrament, and has thereby been admitted into all the blessings and privileges of the Covenant of grace, he is to put it aside as a thing of the past which has done its appointed work, and is no more to be remembered; or whether he is still to regard it as a living and present reality which should more or less influence his heart, and affect his religious experience. That the latter is true, admits of no reasonable doubt, if we read the sacred Epistles with anything like ordinary attention. Nor is it to be at all wondered at, if we consider *a priori* the object for which Baptism, like Circumcision, was appointed; viz., to be a sign and seal of the righteousness of Faith. For is not Faith required to be in constant exer-

cise? If, therefore, the thing signified by Baptism be part of our habitual experience, is it not natural that Baptism itself should be intended continually to impress our minds with appointed lessons of truth?

In considering these, we shall for brevity's sake, only refer to three subjects which stand in immediate connection with that of which Baptism is the exponent.

1st. It is the *Sign* of our Resurrection Life in Christ from the power and the dominion of sin.

Of this, St. Paul makes special mention, when, in writing to the Romans, he asks,—"How shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into His death?" (Rom. vi. 2, 3): where he evidently urges a consideration of their past Baptism on his Roman converts, upon the ground that it pledged them to a "death unto sin, and new birth unto righteousness;" and he reminds them of the fact, in order to quicken their spiritual life, and rouse them to an increased sense of responsibility. He alludes to the same truth in another Epistle, where he says, —"In whom also ye are circumcised with the cir-

cumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ, buried with Him in Baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead." (Col. ii. 11, 12.)

These passages are quite sufficient to show that the doctrine of Christian Baptism was continually rising up in the mind of St. Paul, as a source of holy animation to the Christian believer in his warfare against the world, the flesh, and the devil. It was evidently not laid by in his mind as a thing of the past, but regarded as an ever-living source of divine influence, by the recollection of which he was quickened to greater zeal and devotedness in the risen life of faith. And if so, ought not we to feel the same? Can this doctrine have altered since the apostolic era? Is it more easy to lead a life of faith now than then? Are the powers of evil less active? Is the necessity for watchfulness less pressing? Or, are we so far advanced in holiness that we can afford to dismiss those sources of spiritual improvement, and those incitements to sustained piety which St. Paul in his day required? Why then, should so many

Evangelical clergymen be afraid of bringing forward the subject in their pulpits? Do they not, by that omission, fail in their conformity to the doctrinal teaching of St. Paul? Do they not rob their flocks of one of the most Scriptural and powerful means by which they might stimulate them to a sense of their holy responsibilities, lead them on to greater self-denial, and quicken them in the risen life of Jesus? And if so, is not this defect of experience a failure in our so called Evangelical Christianity? There is, no doubt, an opposite error into which many clergymen of another school fall; viz., that of introducing the subject of Baptism both unnecessarily and offensively; dragging it into every subject, and from all points of the compass, without any clear and well-defined distinction between a spiritual Regeneration to privileges, and an inward Renovation of nature; speaking of it in a bald and unguarded manner, so as to mislead the minds of ignorant persons, and leave them under the impression that if they have only been baptized, and abstain from gross sins, they are safe. But these indiscreet babblings on the one side, form no apology for our own cold silence on the other. So much

the more, indeed, ought we to redeem the true spirituality of this great doctrine, and give it that legitimate place which the Holy Ghost assigns to it in Scripture.

2ndly. Baptism is a *Seal* of Assurance to us, in respect of all God's Covenant Promises.

It seals the Faith of the believer with an unchanging token of the Divine Faithfulness; and is therefore, when rightly understood, a means of conveying to our souls both habitual and inestimable consolation. Who does not know by experience the ten thousand discouragements which are felt by timid hearts in the life of religion? How ready is the voice of unbelief to rise up, questioning all our right to God's promises! How easily we are depressed by the sense of indwelling sin, and tempted to doubt the very existence of the grace of God within us! At such seasons what are we to do? Where shall we find our right and title to plead the covenant promises? What certainty can we have that we have been "accepted in the beloved"? Are we to rest our evidence of these blessings solely on our own subjective consciousness of Christianity? Are we to base it on our recollection of a past experience, when we once

felt deep convictions of sin, cast ourselves by faith on the finished Redemption of Christ, and found, therein, a perfect peace? It is comforting, no doubt, that we should be able to trace out holy recollections of this kind, especially if we should have departed from the "Guide of our youth," and plunged into the follies of the world, and the cares of life, without any previous renovation of heart by the Holy Spirit: then these more positive marks of a conversion and change of inward nature are absolutely essential. Indeed, under all circumstances, they ought to be felt; for "without holiness no man can see the Lord," and it is ever a part of that holiness to mourn with godly sorrow over sin, and draw by faith out of the fulness of grace which flows from atonement. All this subjective religion, however, has been graciously provided by God with the assurance of a covenant certainty, not only by reason of His promises, but of the oath or pledge under which He ratifies and seals those promises in Baptism. It must be borne in mind that Saul of Tarsus enjoyed all that we have just described after his conversion to Christ; he repented, and believed the Gospel, and no doubt found peace of conscience by reason of mental faith. Neverthe-

less, he had no Covenant Assurance of Forgiveness till he had been baptized; for it was said to him, —"Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins." (Acts xxii.) We are not to suppose that the water really cleansed his soul from guilt,—as we have remarked over and over again in the preceding pages,—but only that it acted instrumentally as the visible pledge and Assurance of God's pardon, and as the appointed method by which the Apostle was made a fuller partaker of covenant grace and mercy. To the same effect the Pentecostal penitents were addressed by St. Peter,—"Repent and be baptized, every one of you, for the Remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost;" not meaning His miraculous gifts, as we have before proved on page 20, but the ordinary gifts of spiritual life in Jesus Christ. It is impossible to doubt that Faith alone forms the true justificatory ground for our reception of these blessings, without which Baptism by itself will never avail; but it is no less evident, from these and other passages, that Faith of itself without Baptism will never furnish the believer with that full supply of grace which it is the promise of the Holy Ghost to impart, and our right and title to

which it seals with the richest and most loving form of divine assurance. If all those weak believers, therefore, who are tempted in the spirit of unbelief, to doubt their interest in the Covenant of Grace because they persistently look to their indwelling sins, and to their transient feelings and impressions of God's presence in their hearts, instead of resting on the immutable promises of God which never change with the fluctuations of human feeling, but are like Himself "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever;" if such persons would but recollect that they stand firm by Baptism, in God's covenant; and that whether they realize its blessings or not, independently altogether of their own subjective consciousness of divine acceptance, they have a right and title to plead God's promises, and rest assured of His covenant good-will and favour; there would then be far less dishonour done to the Faithfulness of God by doubts and fears and unbelief, and there would arise in the Church a much stronger and more healthy form of piety than that under which we now too often languish and decay. To recur for experimental consolation and assurance, under such circumstances, to the past sacrament of Baptism,

and to trace in it the certain presence of a Saviour's love, and of the Spirit's power, becomes not only a privilege but a duty. Only never let us rest upon the outward rite of the sacrament, apart from the Grace which is conveyed through it to those who receive it by Faith. Archbishop Usher well remarks in one place,—"As Baptism, administered to those of years, is not effectual unless they believe; so we can make no comfortable use of our Baptism, administered in our infancy, until we believe. The righteousness of Christ, and all the promises of grace, were in my Baptism estated upon me, and sealed up unto me on God's part; but then I come to have the profit and benefit of them, when I come to understand what grant God in Baptism hath sealed unto me, and actually to lay hold upon it by Faith." What this benefit is, Mr. Bickersteth, in his treatise on Baptism, well explains, saying,—"Baptism is the Seal or Assurance of a personal share in the Covenant of God's love. . . . Faith lays hold of this testimony, and realizes it, so that the 'assurance of hope' is imparted unto us. Those who know how feeble our Faith is, and what helps it wants for all its arduous conflicts with the world, the flesh, and the devil,

will not think lightly of so great a help to Faith. It is a pledge of God's entire willingness and gracious desire to bestow on us His Holy Spirit, and to renew our souls unto holiness. When God has provided a special ordinance for my individual introduction into His visible Church, I have additional and personal ground afforded me that He loves me, and would not that I should perish."[w]

3rdly. Baptism is an *Instrument* of Ingrafting into, or Union with, the whole Church of Christ.

St. Paul states this in the plainest manner possible, when he writes,—"For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free, and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." (1 Cor. xii. 13.) Every sincere believer, therefore, has always a right to look back upon his past Baptism as the means, under God's Grace, by which he was joined together in Christ with the whole body of the Church. If he venture still further back to the everlasting decrees of God's counsel, he may possibly, trace out an *à priori* cause for this; but viewed as a matter of secondary and subordinate causation, he can reach to no other origin

[w] Bickersteth on "Baptism." P. 86.

than the work of the Holy Spirit in his Baptism. St. Paul at all events, in the passage just quoted, did so; and who are we, in the nineteenth century, that we should oppose him? This would be the essence of rationalism. Taking our stand then, on this platform, we may constantly look back to this sacrament as the outward and visible pledge of our Union with the whole Church of Christ. However separated by earthly marks of distinction, whether we stand by the side of the tattoed New Zealander, or the swarthy African, or the sunburnt Hindoo, or the snow-beaten Laplander, we shall find that all our Covenant promises and privileges are sealed equally to us in the same blessed token of divine love. Here, therefore, in so far as it is the first visible pledge of God's covenant love to His people, Baptism becomes to us a spiritual bond of Christian union. May we thus realize its blessings. May we be filled, and fulfilled with the heavenly benediction of brotherly love; and ever rejoice in acknowledging all as brethren in Christ Jesus who are admitted to be "fellow-citizens of the saints, and of the household of God," through the power of a living faith, and the sacramental efficacy of Baptism.

CONCLUSION.

"*Sprinkling*," or "*Immersion*."

It will be observed that all reference to the proper method of using water in Baptism (whether by Sprinkling or Immersion), has been studiously avoided in the preceding pages. The reason has been, that the whole question is regarded as one of comparatively little importance. It only becomes important when the practice of immersion is regarded as essential to the validity of the sacrament. Not to leave this point of Baptist theology untouched, therefore, it may be well to add a few concluding words as to the grounds on which the necessity of immersion is denied, and the lawfulness of sprinkling or pouring water on the body in Baptism is contended for.

One would not naturally go back to the Old Testament for this purpose. Yet there is a passage which involuntarily occurs to the mind, as

at least, affording some antecedent probability in favour of "sprinkling" rather than "immersion." Predicting the conversion of the Jews to Christ, Ezekiel says,—"Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you." (Chap. xxxvi. 25.) Now whether this be taken literally, or spiritually, every one must, at any rate, allow that it is far more in harmony with the practice of "sprinkling" water over converts received into Christianity, than of "immersing, or dipping them in water." We do not press this passage as any proof that immersion is improper. All we contend for is, that the fact of the Holy Spirit having here used the word "sprinkle" in connection with entering the Christian Covenant, affords a strong presumptive proof that there can be nothing contrary to the divine mind in adopting that custom in Baptism. The same form of proof may be gathered out of the ceremonial purifications under the law of Moses. If all these purifications had been divided into "sprinkling" by blood, and "immersing" by water; then we think, the Baptists might have made out a strong presumptive argument in their favour. But they were not. Ceremonial purification with water was no less ordained by sprinkling, than by immersion. In

the law of leprosy, for example, the priest was to "sprinkle" the leper with water. (Lev. xiv. 7.) Again, the Levites were to be cleansed by the "sprinkling" of water. (Num. viii. 7. See also Num. xix. 13, 18, 19, 20.) At this point of the argument, therefore, we merely say that as far as the employment of water in the Old Testament Church can be regarded as typical of its intended use in that of the New Testament, the question of sprinkling or immersion is perfectly open, and it should be regarded in itself as a matter of very little importance.

When we advance, however, to the New Testament, the Baptists meet us with an assertion which, if true, would entirely alter the case, and immediately compel us to regard all Baptism as irregular if not invalid, unless administered by dipping the entire body beneath water. They mantain that the Greek word βαπτίζω has only one meaning; viz., washing by total immersion, and that any other interpretation of it is unscriptural.

In reply to this, we may concede, perhaps, that viewed etymologically, this word does involve the idea of immersion. But that is not the question. Our real inquiry ought not to be about the classi-

cal texture of the word; but about the *Scripture use* of it. Just criticism asks whether the word βαπτίζω, and its cognate forms, are not found in Scripture in connection with sprinkling, or even with other applications of water, beside the sprinkling, and the total immersion of the body. We ask, for instance, (1) whether the Pharisee, with whom our Lord dined, expected Him to immerse his whole body in water, when he wondered at his not washing before dinner? (Luke xi. 38.) The words are,—"He marvelled that he had not first *washed*," literally—"been baptized,"—ἐβαπτίσθη. To any one whose mind is not warped by the desire to sustain a particular opinion at all costs, this must surely be conclusive. The customs of Jewish society at that time are alone sufficient to prove that, βαπτίζω, is not here used of a perfect immersion of the body, but only of pouring water over the hands or face. Compare Mark vii. 2; or refer to any independent testimony as to the ablutions of the Jews before meal-time. Where is there a single scrap of evidence to show that they stripped and dipped themselves in a bath, and thought it necessary to submerge their entire bodies in water before dinner? The very notion of it is

preposterous. Yet it is to this that the Baptists are bound and tied. If not, they must surrender their theory, that the βαπτίσμα requires a total immersion of the body. Let them choose their own alternative. We ask (2), whether the use of the word βαπτίζω in 1 Cor. x. 2, could have possibly implied a submerging of the bodies of the Israelites in the waters of the Red Sea? That was the condition of the *Egyptians*, not the Israelites. As for the Israelites, we read in Exodus xiv. 22, that they "went into the midst of the sea, on *dry ground*." Yet they were "baptized (ἐβαπτίζαντο) unto Moses in the cloud, and in the sea." That is to say, they were baptized on the dry ground! How could that have been? Only by the sprinkling of the spray and foam which fell upon them. Perhaps it will be said that the word baptize in this passage is simply to be taken as metaphorical of the enclosing of Israel within the sea, and that it therefore falls in better with the type of immersion than it does with that of sprinkling. Far otherwise! For as symbolical of sprinkling, the type would be perfect. But of immersion, it would be very imperfect; inasmuch as it would contain no counterpart to that portion of the water which

covers the *head* of the baptized person during the process of dipping. We ask (3), whether the word βαπτίσμα in 1 Pet. iii. 20, when typically referred to the ark of Noah, can in any way be strained to mean a total immersion? How could that have been? Was the ark capsized? Did its roof sink beneath the waters? On the contrary, the whole point of its history consisted in its power to float, not to sink. Noah was saved by the ark *upon* the water, and not *beneath*. Hence when St. Peter says, "the like figure whereunto Baptism doth now save us," we have a right to infer that he does not look upon Baptism as any necessary submerging, but simply as a process of passing through water. In other words, a careful investigation into the word βαπτίζω throughout the New Testament proves that it is to be interpreted in a large and unrestricted sense, which though primarily meaning "to immerse," may also mean "to wash" in any manner,—as by "sprinkling" or "pouring water on a person,—or to "pass through water, without being covered by it." Hence the Baptist theory, which lays it down that no one is truly baptized without immersion fails altogether in Scripture proofs.

This is one of the weakest points in Baptist theology. If it simply contended that the New Testament usage of Baptism *sanctioned* immersion, we should never dispute with it; for such is the doctrine of the Church of England also. But when it presumes to say,—"That must be your only form of administration in Baptism, otherwise you do not follow the teaching of Scripture," then we charge it with going beyond the Word of the Lord, and dropping into sectarianism. We should like to know in what part of Jerusalem three thousand souls were dipped in Baptismal water on the day of Pentecost. Even if they had been dipped in batches of twenties, without one moment's intermission between nine in the morning and six in the evening (*i.e.*, for *nine* consecutive hours, allowing no repose whatever to the Apostles), and supposing that the time occupied in dipping each batch of twenty had only been five minutes, —it would have been impossible for more than two thousand one hundred and twenty to have received Baptism within the time appointed! Take another case, we should like to ask whether it is probable that when the jailor of Philippi and his household were baptized in the middle of the night,

they were all dipped in water? Is it probable that the conveniences were at hand? These considerations, to say nothing of the more critical arguments just discussed, are surely enough to prove that the question of Baptism is independent of the quantity of water used in the sacrament, or of its form of application. If anything more were needed to do this, we would only ask whether it is in accordance with the spirituality of the Gospel to tie up the efficacy of the sacrament of Baptism to the mechanical method of applying water to the baptized person? And again, is it consistent with the principles of Christian liberty, that the same form of administering Baptism which suited the habits and the climate of the inhabitants of Palestine nearly two thousand years ago, should be forced upon every nation of the globe from the north to the south poles? Is it not much more agreeable with the general tenor of Christianity, which lays down no exact law upon details connected with the administration of the Lord's Supper (except that it should consist in bread and wine), to believe that, in the same way, it never meant to lay down any exact law upon the form of administering Baptism, except that it should be effected through water?

Such is the opinion of the Church of England. It immerses or sprinkles, as members desire; esteeming the privilege of choice a law of Christian liberty, and agreeing therein with the doctrine of the primitive Church.

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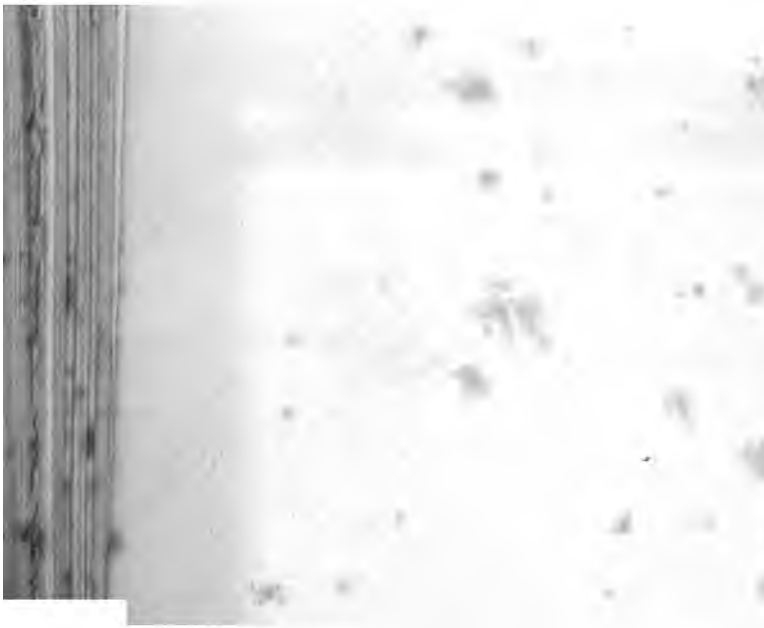
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